March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month

March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month. A brain injury can happen anytime, anywhere and to anyone. In fact, every 13 seconds, someone in the U.S. suffers a brain injury. An estimated 3.5 million people in the U.S. sustain an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) annually. And more than 12 million Americans live with the impact of ABI.

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) joins a nationwide network of state brain injury organizations affiliated with the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA), including self-advocates, families and volunteers to mark and recognize Brain Injury Awareness Month. The mission of BIA-MA is to provide Prevention, Education, Advocacy, and Support to brain injury survivors, caregivers, and professionals.

During the month of March, BIA-MA is conducting many activities including TV and billboard advertising, state house legislative advocacy, educational events, and social media campaigns under the #BLUEforBrainInjury campaign. The goal of the #BLUEforBrainInjury campaign is to increase the awareness of the number of people affected by brain injury, including survivors, family members, caregivers, friends and professionals working in the field of brain injury.

Here are just a few of the ways you can work with BIA-MA to help increase brain injury awareness. For more ideas please visit our #BLUEforBrainInjury website (www.biama.org/BLUEforBrainInjury.html):

- **Awareness:**
  - Light your building BLUE to match the Zakim Bridge, TD Garden, and South Station
  - Use the BIA-MA Web page www.biama.org/BlueForBrainInjury.html for resources and information
- **Legislative advocacy:**
  - Call your legislator(s) to advocate for the Cognitive Rehabilitation Bill (SD1790 & HR3343) and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s (MRC) FY’16 ASK of $22.8 million
  - Use the sample advocacy script provided on our website when you call your legislators
  - View the “Faces of Brain Injury” videos on www.biama.org/BLUEforBrainInjury.html
- **Educational Events you can attend:**
  - Attend the BIA-MA 34th Annual Brain Injury Conference – for survivors, caregivers, professionals (3/26) www.biama.org/conferences.html
  - Attend the ABI Continuing Education Series Seminar: The Aphasias and Cognitive-Communicative Disorders Associated with ABI (3/19) www.biama.org/ABItraining.html
  - Attend the Department of Public Health (DPH) Concussion Forum / Panel Presentation (3/18)
- **Social Media ideas:**
o **LIKE** our Facebook page (search Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts)

o **FOLLOW** us on Twitter (search @BrainInjuryMA)

o **SHARE** and **RETWEET** our posts throughout the month of March

o *Change your profile picture on Monday, March 16th*, to our **BLUE_BRAIN.jpg** (download from [www.biama.org/BLUEforBrainInjury.html](http://www.biama.org/BLUEforBrainInjury.html)). *Let’s turn Facebook and Twitter BLUE!* After your profile picture is changed post one of these messages (or create one of your own:

  - I’ve changed my profile picture to support BIA-MA
  - I’ve changed my profile picture because I love a brain injury survivor
  - I’ve changed my profile picture because I love a caregiver

- **Membership and Fundraising:**
  - **Become a member of BIA-MA** go to [www.biama.org/membership.html](http://www.biama.org/membership.html)
  - **Participate in the Boston Globe GRANT program for print subscribers.** Designate the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts as the non-profit of your choice on the voucher.

“The number of brain injuries is increasing at an alarming rate and many of those individuals need state-funded brain injury services,” says BIA-MA Executive Director, Nicole Godaire. “Every year, there are 64,000 new brain injuries in Massachusetts alone. There is a need for not only more services, but also more brain injury prevention and education about helmets and seat belts to help decrease the number of individuals who are seriously injured or who die as the result of a brain injury.”

In Massachusetts, call (800) 242-0030 to get access to a clearinghouse of information and resources about brain injury services and providers including but not limited to physical therapists, transportation, veterans services, attorneys, adult day health centers, neurologists, support groups, rehabilitation facilities and home health care.

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA), a private, non-profit organization, provides support to brain injury survivors and their families, offers programs to prevent brain injuries, educates the public on the risks and consequences of brain injury, and advocates for legislation and services. For more information on the Association, call (508) 475-0032 or visit the website at [http://www.biama.org](http://www.biama.org)