March 2023
Heads Up Headlines is published by the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts. We welcome manuscripts on issues that are important to the brain injury community. Please send submissions in a standard Microsoft Word document to marketing@biama.org.

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Cover: Our vision is to create additional pathways for those impacted by brain injury to receive the right information, the right services, and the right support, at the right time. This vision will be fulfilled in part by the *New* Resource Centers in the Pittsfield and Westborough offices.

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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

Spring is on its way and the winter doldrums will be leaving us soon! At the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA), the first step towards spring is always Brain Injury Awareness Month in March.

BIA-MA has great plans for March to increase brain injury awareness with a social media campaign highlighting “More Than My Brain Injury”. BIA-MA is also participating in the Brain Injury Association of America’s Brain Injury Awareness Day on Capitol Hill and “Become an Advocate” Facebook Live.

Please join us at our IN-PERSON 41st Annual Brain Injury Conference held on March 29th & 30th. After the pre-conference on the 29th, BIA-MA will host our Annual Meeting with a screening of the documentary film “The House We Lived In” followed with Q&A with Todd and Tim O’Donnell. Conference day on Thursday March 30th will feature keynote speaker, Carole Starr, 25 workshops, and an Exhibitor Hall showcasing community resources and more. I hope to see you there!
Learn more at www.biama.org/annualconference

BIA-MA’s vision is to create additional pathways for those impacted by brain injury to receive the right information, the right services, and the right support, at the right time. To help fulfill this vision, BIA-MA now has on-site Brain Injury Resource Centers in the Pittsfield and Westborough offices (see the front cover). Also, additional staff has been hired for BIA-MA’s Neuro Resource Facilitation Program that will provide one-on-one navigation of brain injury resources, services, and supports for those affected by brain injury.

Our 2023 Golf Classic will be held again at the Haven Country Club in Boylston on Monday, June 19th. Last year with sponsorships, donations, and golfers we raised over $38,000. There are multiple ways to participate in this event: play, become a sponsor or donate to the auction/raffle.
Learn more at www.biama.org/golf

BIA-MA is proud to partner once again with the Numbers for Nonprofits Program at the 2023 ASICS Falmouth Road Race. The 2022 Team BIA-MA runners raised more than $16,000 – the biggest Falmouth Road Race fundraiser ever!!! You can make a difference by running for Team BIA-MA or supporting our runners. Learn more at www.biama.org/flamouthrr

As always, I would like to thank our staff, providers, caregivers, and brain injury survivors for your contributions towards our mission.

See you in the Spring!

Nicole M. Godaire, CEO
Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts
Throughout the past few years, BIA-MA has maintained programming virtually. Support groups meet virtually every month, ranging from specific categories of attendees such as “Tea & Talk” for female brain injury survivors, the “Dual Recovery” group where we explore the intersection of substance use with brain injury, and larger groups welcoming all persons impacted by brain injury. The need to connect, to empathize, to learn, and to be heard will always be present, and BIA-MA support groups remain consistently dedicated to meeting this need.

As the threat of COVID waned, BIA-MA was able to offer some special events in-person. What a joy to see each other face to face again! Thanks to funding from Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s Statewide Head Injury Program along with other sources, BIA-MA staff and survivors enjoyed excursions to many popular locations across the state. Kicking off the in-person events, was a visit to the New Bedford Whaling Museum followed by the Hancock Shaker Village in the Berkshires. One of the highlights of 2022 was the return of a favorite BIA-MA tradition: an afternoon with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at their summer home in Lenox.

BIA-MA offered many virtual presentations for survivors about museums, authors, sports teams, meditation, chair yoga, nature preserves, and zentangle! In addition, brain injury survivors gathered to paint ceramics in Northborough and fuse glass into gorgeous wall hangings and dishes in Bridgewater and the Stone Zoo animal encounters with gorgeous scenery!

Seasons come and go, but one thing remains: BIA-MA support groups and recreational events continue to be available for brain injury survivors, their caregivers, family members and friends, and professionals from the harbors to the mountains.
YOU’RE INVITED TO
THE BIA-MA ANNUAL MEETING!

MARCH 29, 2023, 6:00 PM
BEST WESTERN ROYAL PLAZA
MARLBOROUGH, MA

Join us at the BIA-MA Annual Meeting right after pre-conference for complementary appetizers, food, refreshments, a screening of the documentary film “The House We Lived In”, and Q&A with Todd and Tim O’Donnell! It is free, open to everyone, and presents a great opportunity for all those affected by brain injury to gather, reflect on the previous year, and learn more about BIA-MA.

RSVP: www.biama.org/annualmeeting

41ST ANNUAL BRAIN INJURY CONFERENCE - MARCH 29 & 30, 2023

Join us for the 41st Annual Brain Injury Conference being held on Wednesday, March 29th & Thursday, March 30th IN-PERSON at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA.

This pre-conference & conference provides a platform for all those affected by brain injury (survivors, family members, caregivers, and professionals) to learn about new developments in the field of brain injury and provides networking opportunities for community members.

The 41st Annual Brain Injury Conference features the keynote speaker Carole Starr, M.S., 25 workshops over two days, poster presentations, and an Exhibitor Hall showcasing community resources and more!

On Thursday, March 30th Carole Starr will be giving her keynote on “Weasilience: Handling Life’s Wild Moments”. Carole has been living with brain injury since a car accident in 1999, which left her unable to return to her life as an educator and classical musician. Over time, Carole has reinvented herself as a national keynote speaker, the author of the award-winning book To Root & To Rise: Accepting Brain Injury, and the founder of the Maine-based survivor group Brain Injury Voices.

Is your company interested in being a Sponsor or Exhibitor? Check out the Sponsor & Exhibitor Opportunities brochure on www.biama.org/annualconference

BIA-MA is eager and excited to see everyone in-person this year!
Located in Woburn, Warren House was the first Supportive Living, Inc. residential facility and opened 25 years ago. “It was important that we build residential facilities that would create a sense of community,” says Carrol Stephens, SLI founder. “This would be home to them, and everyone needs people around them.” Warren House is modeled around independent living, with residents in one or two-bedroom apartments providing a barrier-free living space including a full kitchen, living room, bathroom and common areas including an outdoor patio. Above you see “The Three Amigos” at Warren House - all original residents.

One of the earliest residents, Peggy, suffered a traumatic brain injury in a car accident at age 15. Despite having to re-learn everything – talking, walking and eating – she was determined to live independently and one of the first residents at Warren House. Peggy loves comedy and writes comedic sketches about her life. She even took stand-up comedy classes, but her limited short-term memory means that she can only perform using a script. Peggy has been an active participant in the BIA-MA Brains At Risk program, telling her life story to program participants. Almost 25 years later, Peggy continues to thrive at Warren House. Here you see Peggy, doing what she does best, laughing!

SLI has hosted the BIA-MA Brains At Risk programs since the 1990’s, although these in-person programs were discontinued with Covid (they are now virtual). Brains At Risk links dangerous driving behaviors to the devastating effects of traumatic brain injury (TBI). The most impactful part of Brains At Risk is when attendees hear the personal stories of those whose lives have been permanently affected by an impaired or reckless driver.

SLI and BIA-MA have partnered on numerous other programs, including the BIA-MA support groups hosted at SLI residential facilities. Arlene Korab, the BIA-MA founder served on the SLI Wellness Center advisory board from 2009 – 2012, and Nicole Godaire, BIA-MA CEO has served on the SLI Neuro-Wellness Center Research Council since 2013. SLI is an active participant in the BIA-MA annual conference and community events such as Cere-Bration: Walk. Roll. Run.

SLI provides a unique residential model for adults with brain injury. In partnership with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other public funding sources, SLI has built and operates four affordable housing residential facilities. Advocates, Inc., SLI’s long-term human services partner, provides health care services to residents, funded by MassHealth. SLI, Advocates and an ever-expanding...
SURVIVOR SPOTLIGHT JOE CAMPBELL

Joe Campbell is a warm, friendly, kind, and generous soul who loves his family, helping others, and inspiring HOPE.

In 2012, Joe hit his head on the top doorjamb of his pickup truck. Although it stunned him, he didn’t realize he had a concussion until two days later when he passed out and awoke with both eyes swollen shut. Joe went to the doctor who thought he was bleeding into his eyes and brain and was immediately sent to Emerson Hospital where they discovered a fracture on the back of his head and fractures in both eye sockets.

Joe had a traumatic brain injury. He was sent to Lahey Clinic Trauma Unit for further treatment where they found three brain hematomas that didn’t require surgery and would be absorbed naturally. However, Joe was left without a sense of smell. He was in Lahey for four days and out of work for six months. Joe feels so lucky and happy to be alive.

Joe was a fighter jet mechanic for the US Air Force, loves the ocean, and spending time with his family. He has a great support system and credits his wife Denise, daughter, son, son-in-law, and two grandchildren for getting him through the TBI. He is a regular attendee of and contributor to BIA-MA’s The Journey: Healing through Self-Expression.

Thank you for your service and inspiring HOPE, Joe!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT SALLY JOHNSON

Sally Johnson is a dedicated, strong, insightful, and encouraging support group leader with a vast understanding of brain injury coupled with empathy beyond measure. In the brain injury community, she is best known as the BABIS (Boston Acquired Brain Injury Support Group) support group facilitator.

Sally started BABIS, considered one of the most successful brain injury support groups, in January 2001 with the help of many outpatient clinician colleagues. At its largest, the attendance of this monthly meeting at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital reached around 60, a separate family/caregiver group was created, and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) graduate students from Northeastern University attended as part of their education. To raise awareness as well as to fundraise for BABIS group outings, Sally initiated the Heads Held High (HHH) annual brain injury walk ‘n rolls that continued for ten years, before passing the baton to BIA-MA.

Sally has a deep background in Social Work including over 25 years at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, from which she retired in 2018. Says Sally, “I was not ready to sever the relationship with BABIS and have continued to be the lead facilitator of the support group. In the Spring of 2020, the BABIS meetings continued on Zoom, thanks to the amazing assistance of BIA-MA and their support group facilitators. I am so grateful to Cynthia Cardeli and Nicole Godaire for making it possible for me to remain involved in this incredible group.” Sally Johnson is married, with two sons, two daughters-in-law, and two grandchildren, ages 8 and 6. She enjoys running, reading, hiking, kayaking, and shelling.

Thank you, Sally, for all you do!
The Brain Injury of Massachusetts has been hard at work to get ready for the next legislative session

In recent months, Nicole Godaire, Chief Executive Officer, and Kelly Buttiglieri, Public Policy Manager attended the Brain Injury Association of America’s Business Practice College and presented “Strategies and Lessons Learned from Massachusetts’ Legislative Efforts to Pass a Mandated Cognitive Rehabilitation bill”.

At the Brain Injury Association of America’s Leadership Conference this past fall, BIA-MA received the award for excellence in Advocacy. The award recognized BIA-MA’s commitment and involvement in the development of comprehensive-community based services for individuals with brain injuries, allowing over 1,100 individuals living with ABI to transition from nursing and long-term rehabilitation facilities to community based settings.

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) would like to congratulate Maura Healey on winning the election as Governor of Massachusetts and Kim Driscoll as Lt. Governor. BIA-MA is optimistic that the needs of the brain injury community will be met with the final FY ’24 budget to fund the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP).

In January, BIA-MA supported three companion bills that were filed in the legislature.

1. **Cognitive Rehabilitation bill - SD706 & HD602** - Filed by Senator Paul Feeney (D-Foxborough) and House Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden)

2. **Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Board bill - SD321 & HD601** - Filed by Senator Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) and House Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden)

3. **Head Injury Treatment Services (HITS) Trust Fund bill - SD2403 & HD603** - Filed by Senator John Keenan (D-Quincy) and House Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden)

Please ask your legislators to support the three bills. Find My Legislator ([malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov))
1. COGNITIVE REHABILITATION BILL - SD706&HD602

Those who survive brain injury face a range of challenges—from temporary symptoms to life-altering disabilities. Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy (CRT) is a process of relearning cognitive skills that have been lost or altered as a result of damage to brain cells, usually caused by a brain injury. If original skills cannot be relearned, then new ones have to be taught to enable a person to compensate for their lost cognitive functions.

This bill will ensure that commercial health insurance plans include cognitive rehabilitation services related to treatment for brain injuries. The effects of brain injury can include impaired thinking, memory, movement, sensation (e.g., vision or hearing), and/or emotional functioning (e.g., personality changes, depression). These impairments—which may result in loss of work and reliance on costly long-term supports—rarely improve without proper rehabilitative treatment.

This legislation will increase access to proven rehabilitative services needed to help individuals with brain injury and increase their ability to live independently.

COVID-19 survivors have this mandated benefit. In January 2021, the legislature passed, and the Governor signed an omnibus health care bill that requires commercial health insurance plans, the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) and MassHealth to cover cognitive rehabilitation specifically for COVID-19 patients. It is now time to make cognitive rehabilitation available to all individuals with an ABI.

Local studies report cognitive rehabilitation reduces costs and saves lives: A comprehensive CHIA report found that costs for typical monthly rates would range from $.01 to $.19 per month, with an average of $.08 per month. In November 2019, a report by The Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University determined:

- When insurance does not pay for the potential for functional improvement after a moderate-to-severe acquired brain injury, the state picks up the cost of ongoing care.
- It is crucial to increase access to post-acute rehabilitation within 3 to 12 months of a severe brain injury.

Reach out to advocacy@biama.org to get involved

2. ABI ADVISORY BOARD - SD321 & HD601

Each year thousands of Massachusetts residents sustain acquired brain injuries (ABI), which include a range of neurological disorders/diseases affecting the brain, with onset after birth. The major categories of ABI include stroke, infection, brain tumors, metabolic and toxic disorders (e.g., anoxia-diminished oxygen related to drug overdose) and trauma, the leading cause of acquired brain injury.

Massachusetts’ efforts to provide services to individuals with brain injury over the past four decades has been guided and supported by advisory boards, councils, and commissions. This bill will establish a permanent Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Advisory Board. The ABI Advisory Board will review, advise, and report on services and supports, and public policy for individuals with acquired brain injuries and their families.

3. HEAD INJURY TREATMENT SERVICES (HITS) TRUST FUND - SD2403 & HD603

The Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) is funded through the Head Injury Treatment Services (HITS) trust fund (Line Item # 4120-6002) and the state budget (Line Item # 4120-6000). The HITS trust fund collects mandatory civil fines for speeding violations, Operating Under the Influence of Alcohol and Driving Under the Influence of Drugs offences (OUI/DUI) and Driving to Endanger.

This bill will increase funding for the HITS trust fund to better serve individuals with a TBI receiving SHIP services. The bill will authorize the following fines to be deposited in the HITS trust fund:

- Increase fines for speeding violations to $100.
- 100% of revenues collected for OUI/DWI to be deposited in the trust fund.
- Stagger and increase fines for multiple offenses of OUI/DUI.
- $50 of fines collected under the Hands-Free law.
- Traffic violations in the state have decreased for the following reasons:
  - A reduction in federal and state grants for traffic enforcement decreasing the number of troopers and officers assigned to patrol duty.

Reach out to advocacy@biama.org to get involved
Winter Driving Tips

Driving in winter weather is difficult and dangerous. Motor vehicles run very differently on ice and snow than on warm, dry pavement. Avoid driving in stormy weather whenever possible, keeping the weather forecast in mind when you plan your week.

General tips for winter driving:

• Remove ice and snow from your vehicle before driving. Clear all windows, windshield wipers, headlights, and brake lights. It is very important that you clear the roof so ice and snow does not blow onto vehicles behind you. If you do not, you can be charged with negligent operation.

• If it is snowing, start slowly. Test your brakes by tapping them gently to see how much traction your tires have.

• Reduce your speed. Drive carefully and accelerate slowly.

• Never brake hard on icy roads. You will lose steering control. If you skid, remember to turn into the direction of the skid.

• Increase the space between your vehicle and others. You need more space to stop safely on slippery surfaces.

• Be alert for emergency vehicles and yield to plows. Do not crowd plows.

• Bridges and highway overpasses freeze before the rest of the road and can be very slippery. This is because the ground does not insulate them.

• Keep your windshield wipers and defroster in good condition.

• Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent the gas line from freezing. Keep your windshield washer filled with cleaning fluid that won’t freeze.

• Keep a blanket, flashlight, and small shovel in your trunk.

• If you get stuck in your car in the snow, make sure your exhaust pipe is cleared of snow.

For more information visit: www.massrmv.com
Antidotes for the Winter Blues
Barbara Webster, Survivor and Family Educator, BIA-MA

1. First, give yourself ample time to recuperate from the holidays. It always takes longer than you think it should.

2. Make notes on what you would like to remember to do differently next holiday season. Tuck it into your calendar for the next October. (Yes, BEFORE the holidays are upon you!)

3. Exercise! Even 20 minutes of stretching can help you feel better.

4. Sunshine! Get outdoors when you can, if only for a short walk.

5. Check your journals/calendars from the past year. You may notice you have made a lot more progress or managed a lot more difficulties than you remember! (By the way, keep those calendars for memory cues and disability reviews.)

6. Think about what is most important to you in your life.

7. Think about some small steps you can take to help you bring more of what is most important to you into your life.

8. Start a Victory Journal! Take a few moments every day to write down three things that were successful or made you smile that day. It is amazing how something this simple can shift your focus!

9. Take breaks. Make time for things that help you recharge.

10. Think positive. If you think you can do something, you will think about HOW you can do something and pretty soon you will be DOING it!

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning but anyone can start today to make a new ending” Bonnie Mohr

Continued from page 11 (SLI)

Group of community partners including local colleges and universities have created the SLI Neuro-Wellness program, where the highlight is the Neuro-Fit exercise program. Neuro-Wellness programs, supported by the MA Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP), provide enriching, hands-on activities for SLI residents and community participants suffering the effects of brain injury.

The combination of a safe and caring residential environment and Neuro-Wellness programs is a winner. We have seen across-the-board improvements in residents’ physical and mental wellbeing. Douglas House resident, Tom agrees “When I was living alone, I used to work out, but I like the regular exercise class schedule at Douglas House. And I like having meals and talking with the other residents here. I’m in a good place. Just working together to strive to make everybody’s lives independent.”

Visit www.Advocates.org/BrainInjury or www.SupportiveLivingInc.org to learn more about the Supported Living Program and eligibility requirements.

Questions? Contact Heather Dely, Director of Supported Living Program, at HDely@Advocates.org (508) 628-7205.
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Community Rehab Care
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NeuroRestorative is a leading provider of post-acute and subacute rehabilitation and support services for adults and children with brain and spinal cord injuries and other neurological challenges. In a variety of locations and settings, we offer a continuum of care and community-based programs, including specialized pediatric and adolescent services as well as programs for Veterans.

For more information or to make a referral:

📞 800-743-6802
✉️ neuroinfo@neurorestorative.com
🌐 neurorestorative.com
Vinfen provides a comprehensive set of services for individuals living with brain injuries, including our person-centered, community-based Brain Injury Community Center (BICC). Our goal is to assist members in increasing community integration and building interpersonal relationships and meaningful work. Members and staff work together in all areas of Center operations with a shared focus on developing or refining key life skills.

THE CENTER SUPPORTS INDIVIDUALS TO DEVELOP OR ATTAIN:

- Self-Advocacy
- Community Connections
- Educational Goals
- Financial Counseling & Housing Opportunities
- Personal & Life Skills
- Employment Options
- Mindfulness
- Social Connections
- Other supports on an as-needed or individual basis

vinfen.org/bicc  617- 616-2422

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Personalized solutions at home and in the heart of the community.

Together, Advocates and Supportive Living, Inc. partner to provide the highest quality of housing, services, and programs to meet the challenges of brain injury survivors. Our goal is to ensure people live their lives to the fullest.

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- Community Supports
- Day Services
- Neuro Wellness Social Activities
- Brain Injury Support Group

Do you know someone who would flourish in a more independent living environment?

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Learn More
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BrainInjury@Advocates.org
www.Advocates.org/BrainInjury

Reclaiming Lives Through Neurorehabilitation

Seven Hills NeuroCare (SHNC) provides post-acute brain injury rehabilitation to survivors of acquired brain injuries and people with neurodevelopmental disorders.

SHNC’s multidisciplinary team of licensed and certified professionals offers individualized services to fit within people’s home- and community-based routines. These services include cognitive rehabilitation, rehabilitation counseling, behavior analysis, psychology, speech language therapy, nursing, assistive technology, and coaching/aid with daily living skills.

People supported also have access to day programming, and workforce readiness and employment with Seven Hills ASPiRE!, and individual psychotherapy and psychiatry through Seven Hills Behavioral Health.

At SHNC, our goal is to help people reclaim their lives, and maximize their independence and recovery in the community. To learn more, contact: Dr. Jonathan Worcester, Vice President of Seven Hills NeuroCare, at 508.320.4991, or jworcester@sevenhills.org.

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• DOE and OCCS approved
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- Cognitive rehabilitation
- Sensory enrichment program
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Community Rehab Care

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Upcoming BIA-MA Events

41st ANNUAL BRAIN INJURY CONFERENCE       MARCH 29th & 30th
2023 BIA-MA ANNUAL MEETING                  MARCH 29th
2023 GOLF CLASSIC                           JUNE 19th

Learn more at www.biama.org or call 508-475-0032

Head’s Up Headlines Newsletter Has Arrived!!