The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) takes great pride in our education programs for brain injury survivors, families, caregivers, and professionals. And in the upcoming year we will be providing even more educational opportunities due to an increase in demand for brain injury training.

The demand for brain injury training has increased significantly due to the fact that each year thousands of individuals sustain Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI) in the United States and throughout Massachusetts. These injuries may result in a wide range of disabling conditions, including physical, cognitive, and behavioral disorders, which require comprehensive assessment, rehabilitation, and for many, long-term services and supports.

We are pleased to announce that the ABI Clinical Continuing Education Series is back by popular demand and contains new topics! Starting in the Fall, the new topics will include: “Neurobehavioral Disorders associated with ABI: Meeting the Challenges” (A brief overview of the most common cognitive and neuropsychiatric disorders associated with ABI), “Functional Neuroanatomy” (A review of the structures and functions of the central nervous system). The ABI Series was developed in collaboration with experts in the field of brain injury, including Dr. Francesca LaVecchia, Ph.D., Neuropsychologist and former Chief Neuropsychologist for the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and crowd favorite, to enhance the knowledge, expertise, and skills of professionals working with brain injury survivors. Continuing Education Credits are available for professionals in certain fields. Learn more at www.biama.org.

For professionals, including residential providers, it is our goal to provide regularly scheduled brain injury educational programs throughout the year. This year we will be offering ACBIS certification training, enhanced ABI Clinical Series with new focused topics, and MRC Provider trainings! The Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists (ACBIS) exam preparation course, being held Tuesdays, September 5th - October 17th, is a 7-week series with lecturer Dr. Christopher Carter, Psy.D., CBIST.

“For educational programming” continued on page 5
Two and a half years ago, the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) began advocating for the passage of the Cognitive Rehabilitation bill. I would like to highlight the bill’s progress and to explain the next steps to convince the legislature to pass this bill.

**What is a Cognitive Rehabilitation?**

For brain injury survivors, cognitive problems may be the greatest barrier to returning to “normal” life after the injury. After an ABI, individuals frequently experience difficulties with memory, attention, social behavior, judgment, and planning and carrying out future actions. Cognitive difficulties can affect a person’s ability to care for himself, keep appointments, complete tasks, or interact with people appropriately. These difficulties create lifelong burdens for survivors as well as their families.

Cognitive rehabilitation is a process of relearning old functions or developing new ones. Learning is a repetitive activity and so is rehabilitation. The accumulating evidence shows that cognitive rehabilitation is one of the most effective types of intervention for a brain injury survivor.

**What is the Cognitive Rehabilitation bill?**

The Cognitive Rehabilitation bill will require commercial health insurance plans to include cognitive rehabilitation services for individuals with a brain injury. The bill comes at NO cost to the state. Cognitive rehabilitation services help increase a survivor’s ability to live independently, thereby lessening the need for costlier long-term supports.

**What have we done so far?**

This bill was first introduced by Senate Majority Leader Harriette Chandler (D-Worcester) and Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden) in the last legislative session. After the hearing in November of 2015, the Joint Financial Services Committee referred the bill to the Center for Health Information and Analysis (CHIA) for a cost analysis study.

CHIA hired contractor Compass Health Analytics to do the actual examination. BIA-MA spoke with Compass to give them a “10,000-foot view” on brain injury and provided them with a list of research/information on cognitive rehabilitation therapy, names of various professionals in the field and trade groups to help with their evaluation. In July 2016, the Committee referred the bill “to study” since it still had not received the CHIA report. During the last legislative session, the cognitive rehabilitation bill progressed further than expected. The Committee only sent a handful of bills to CHIA, including the Cognitive Rehabilitation bill.

“Cog Rehab” continued on page 3
SAVE THE DATE!
JOIN US AT THE 2017 WALK & ROLL FOR BRAIN INJURY!

Saturday, September 9, 2017
Ashuwillticook Rail Trail
Farnams Road, Cheshire, MA 01225

Saturday, September 16, 2017
Buzzard’s Bay Recreation Area
Cape Cod Canal
110 Main Street, Bourne, MA 02532

Sunday, September 24, 2017
Maple Street Field Track
220 Maple Street, Framingham, MA 01702
Framingham State University (FSU)

“Cog Rehab” continued from page 2
In January 2017, Senator Chandler and Representative Ferguson refiled the bill and 70 legislators signed on as co-sponsors. The bill was renamed an Act Improving Lives by Ensuring Access to Brain Injury Treatment (S.502/H.2166).

The Financial Services Committee held a hearing in July 2017. Many people testified at the hearing and highlighted the results of the CHIA report. The Report concluded that on average the “more likely increase is in the range of 0.008 %” or “$0.04” per month for commercial health insurance”. A medical professional panel highlighted their experiences on the benefits of cognitive rehabilitation and the frustration in dealing with health insurance companies in seeking coverage. In addition, three survivors and one family member each expressed their need to obtain cognitive rehabilitation to enhance their recovery and difficulties in dealing with their health insurance company for coverage.

What are the next steps
BIA-MA now awaits the Financial Service Committee to issue a favorable report on the bill, hopefully this fall. For those that did not contact the members of the Committee to share your personal story and support, you can still email the co-chairs, Senator Jamie Eldridge at James.Eldridge@masenate.gov and Representative Aaron Michlewitz at Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov. Once receiving a favorable report, it is expected the bill will be sent to the Joint Committee on Healthcare Financing. We will keep the brain injury community up to date on the bill’s progress and how you can continue advocating for its passage.
Helping Our Patients Live Life to the Fullest.

At Spaulding Rehabilitation Network (SRN), we help our patients rebuild their physical and cognitive function after traumatic brain injury. We focus on helping them find the emotional strength to thrive in the days to come.

Our brain injury clinical teams bring specialized experience and world-class expertise to the patients in their care. Our physician-led teams provide an unwavering commitment and the support to help patients and family members stay hopeful, determined and strong.

SRN provides patients and families access to an unmatched range of services and programs - from advanced evaluation technologies to evidence based rehabilitation programs to extensive family and community resources.

Patients in the BI Program at Spaulding consistently achieved higher rates of functional improvement than national averages (UDS & e-rehab database).

The TBI Program at Spaulding has been selected as a Model Systems site by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR).

Pushing our understanding of the biology of recovery.
Find your strength.

NeuroRestorative Massachusetts is a leading provider of post-acute rehabilitation and support services for individuals with brain injuries and other neurological challenges. In a variety of locations and settings, we offer a continuum of care through our community-based programs.

- Neurorehabilitation
- Neurobehavioral
- Supported Living
- Transitional Living
- Host-Home
- Day Treatment
- Outpatient
- Respite
- Neurofunctional Home & Community

800-743-6802
NeuroRestorative.com
Agency Collaboration Enables Creation of Concussion Webinar

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts collaborates with several organizations in an effort to spread brain injury awareness as well as the importance of prevention of brain injury.

Most recently, BIA-MA teamed up with the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) to create a webinar, “Concussion Treatment, Management and Prevention”. This webinar, is offered to healthcare professionals to educate them on identifying, managing and understanding the physical and cognitive limitations of concussions. Emphasis is placed on return to play regulations and aspects of concussion management.

CME’s are available to those who participate in this online resource. If you are seeking CME credit, the course is available for purchase at: www.massmed.org/CME/ConcussionTreatmentManagementandPrevention

If you are not seeking CME credit for this activity, the video recordings are available FREE at: www.massmed.org/ConcussionTreatmentManagementandPrevention

“Educational programming” continued from cover

(Spaulding Rehabilitation Network). This course, presented for 2 hours each week through an online meeting video conference program, is a voluntary national certification program for both direct care staff and professionals working in brain injury services. To learn more about our next ACBIS course visit www.biama.org/ACBIS.

BIA-MA has also added Thrivers Workshops statewide as a resource for survivors. The goals of the Thrivers Workshop series is: to encourage participants to think “how” instead of “I can’t” when encountering a difficulty or challenge; to empower participants with at least one new practical tip, tool or strategy from each workshop to promote their healing and rehabilitation process; and to instill hope and inspire participants to think about their potential to support their own long-term rehabilitation and continued progress. This series of workshops has been created for BIA-MA by Barbara J. Webster, BIA-MA employee and author of “A Survivor's Guide for Reconstructing Life After Brain Injury”.

The cornerstone for all of our educational programming is the Annual Conference. Targeted for all affected by brain injury (survivors, caregivers, professionals, and residential providers), this event draws over 800 participants to attend 25+ workshops and visit 40+ exhibitor tables. For over 30 years this conference has provided a venue to gather and discuss the challenges facing professionals, and an opportunity for survivors and families to learn about new developments in brain injury. Learn more at www.biama.org/annualconference.

We look forward to seeing you at these educational opportunities!
The 2017 Annual Golf Classic

On Monday, July 19th, golfers, golf enthusiasts, sponsors, and donors attended the 2017 BIA-MA Annual Golf Classic at The Haven Country Club in Boylston, MA. Over $41,000 was raised in support of the BIA-MA mission: To create a better future for those affected by brain injury.

After a welcome by Golf Classic Chairperson & BIA-MA Board member Laura Herman, and an overview of the bramble rules by Golf Pro Hal Jacobs, the golfers drove off to play The Haven’s award winning golf course. During the day there were contests to participate in, awards to be won, and silent auction items to bid on. At the end of the day, the players enjoyed refreshments and a silent auction with great prizes followed by an excellent dinner while listening to the Awards Dinner program.

Alex Niederhauser was the keynote speaker. He shared his personal story about the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) he received in a motor vehicle accident in high school, after which he was faced with relearning nearly all activities and knowledge, from the alphabet to walking again. Due to the services and supports in place from MRC, the Acton Boxborough library program, and BIA-MA, Alex graduated from high school, obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology, became a member of the BIA-MA Speakers Bureau, and is now working as a Peer Counselor.

The outstanding support we received from our golf sponsors, corporate partners, and in-kind donations from around the state made this event possible. Sponsors included: Grill at the Crossroads - Insurance Marketing Agencies (IMA); Eagle - HealthSouth Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital and HealthSouth New England Rehabilitation Hospital; Awards Dinner - Performance FoodService Springfield; Vegas Hole - Philadelphia Insurance Company and Law Office of David Dwork; Beverage Sponsor - Best Western Royal Plaza; and Breakfast Sponsor - Cooney Health.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2018 Annual Golf Classic on June 18, 2018!
2017 Annual Golf Classic Contest and Prize Winners

Longest Drive (men) - Tim Redmond (our hole in one winner in 2016!)
Longest Drive (women) - Suzanne Fantaroni
Closest to pin (men) - Pat Graham
Closest to pin (women) - Suzanne Fantaroni

1st Net (59) - Brian Thomas, Calvin Wiegers, William Wilcox, Don Donegan
2nd Net (40) - Daryl Goodreau, Mike Belford, Bob Luuko, David Dunn
3rd Net (50) - Bruce Atchue, Chris Atchue, Brian Fleury, Mike Murphy
Vinfen transforms lives by building the capacity of individuals, families, organizations, and communities to learn, thrive, and achieve their goals. Our services promote the recovery, resiliency, habilitation, and self-determination of the people we serve. As a human services leader, we strive to be the provider, employer, and partner of choice.

Vinfen proudly supports the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts!

Thank you for serving the needs of people with brain injuries, their families, and their caregivers across Massachusetts.

Strengthening Brain Injury Supports

Seven Hills NeuroCare (SHNC) supports people with brain injuries in their seamless transitions from clinical facilities to residential options that provide person-centered, community-based recreation through day and residential programs. SHNC helps identify each person’s life goals and the steps needed to achieve them. The SHNC interdisciplinary team includes:

- Certified brain injury specialists
- Certified co-occurring treatment specialists
- Clinical behavior specialists
- Medical doctors
- Allied health professionals
- Psychiatrists
- Mental health counselors
- Neuropsychologists
- Neurologists

Through a distinctive array of comprehensive supports, the experienced and dedicated Seven Hills NeuroCare team works to restore hope, independence and dreams. To learn more, call 508.983.2976 or visit sevenhills.org.
Central Region News
Tress Ricker, LSW, Central Regional Manager

Upcoming Central Region Events

- Central Region Family Picnic*: Saturday, August 26th, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at the Ellsworth McAfee Pavilion, 352 South Street (Route 135), Northborough, MA. Survivors and family are invited to bring outdoor games or musical instruments for entertainment. Lunch will be provided. Free!

- Art Therapy Workshops*: 3-week series on Fridays, September 1, 8, 15, 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., at Art Relief, 51 Kondazian Street, Watertown, MA. Space is limited. Cost is $5 per session.

- Crafty Critters Craft Group for Survivors*: September 14 - yarn painting; October 12 - Spooky branches in bottles; November 9 - Craft aprons; December 14 - Spoon snowmen. From 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., at BIA-MA, 30 Lyman Street, Suite 10, Westborough, MA. This is a monthly group for people who like to have fun making crafts and socialize. Space is limited. Call to sign up.

- Walk & Roll for Brain Injury: Sunday, September 24, 9:30 a.m. at Framingham State University, Maple Street Field Track, 220 Maple Street, Framingham, MA 01702. Register online www.biama.org/walk.

For more information or to make reservations contact the Central Regional Office at 508-475-0032 or visit www.biama.org/centralregion

*Sponsored in part by the Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

First Annual Northeast Survivor Picnic

Our first Northeast Survivor Picnic was held on a beautiful, sunny day in June at Salem Willows Park in Salem, MA. Right by the ocean, we set up on the lawn under the willow trees and had boxed lunches for everyone to enjoy. There is something so relaxing about being by the sea on a sunny day, and we certainly felt that. There was an atmosphere of calmness, acceptance, and camaraderie.

The event brought together survivors from around the region who had not yet met each other. New friends were made, and old friends got a chance to spend more time together in a gorgeous location. We had outdoor games to play, but mostly the attendees wanted to socialize and talk about their experiences as brain injury survivors. Some realized they had a lot in common, and offered each other advice about what worked for them. One survivor led the group in some helpful breathing exercises. All in all, it was a day for tranquility and togetherness.
Southeastern Region News
Zelinda Pereira, Southeastern Regional Manager

BIA-MA Manager of the Southeastern Region Appointed

BIA-MA is pleased to announce that Zelinda Pereira has been appointed Manager of the Southeastern Region. For 10 years prior to this promotion, she was the Southeast Region Information & Resource Specialist and is an experienced brain injury professional.

Zelinda emigrated from Portugal over 40 years ago and is a certified Portuguese Interpreter. “It’s been over 10 years since a group of dedicated people came together to open a BIA-MA office in the Southeastern Region to serve the brain injury survivors and their families, spread awareness in the community, and give a voice and guidance to those affected by brain injury,” Pereira said of the milestone. Her goals for the Southeastern Region are to increase the number of support groups and events, as well as to enhance relationships with providers. Welcome Zelinda!

The Bourne Picnic - a Taste of Heaven!

With the summer sun shining upon us, over 50 people from the brain injury community gathered at the Bourne Scenic Park for a Luau themed picnic.

Both new and old friends donned leis, shared stories, inspiration, laughs and some great food! “A Taste of Heaven” brought their mobile truck and cooked us up lots of scrumptious food for this marvelous event. The day finished up with lawn games and walks along the Cape Cod Canal. A special thanks goes out to Vicki Carr and family for helping to coordinate and run the event and making it a huge success!!

Upcoming Southeastern Region Events

• **Walk & Roll for Brain Injury**: Saturday, September 16, 9:30 a.m. at the Buzzard’s Bay Recreation Area, Cape Cod Canal, 110 Main Street, Bourne, MA 02532. Register online www.biama.org/walk.

• **Art Classes* - “Soaring Without Limits; Healing through Arts & Crafts”***: September 19th, October 17th, and November 21st, (Tuesdays) from 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. at BIA-MA, 3119 Cranberry Highway, Suite 5F, East Wareham, MA.

• **8th Annual Halloween Costume Ball***: October - date and location tbd

For more information or to make reservations contact the Southeastern Regional Office at 508-743-0333 or visit www.biama.org/southeasternregion

*Sponsored in part by the Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
A Sporting Approach to Brain Injury Awareness

If you combine a brain injury awareness opportunity with a fun-filled Recreation event for brain injury survivors, their families and friends, it’s a home run! On July 16th, 2017, we gathered at historic Wahconah Park for the Pittsfield Suns baseball game and our “Pitch for Brain Injury Awareness”. Survivor Rebecca Gleason sang an incredible rendition of the National Anthem and Scott Steeves, Jr, also a brain injury survivor, threw out the first pitch to start the ballgame. The crowd enjoyed a BIA-MA outreach table, Brain Injury Trivia, prizes and lots of fun!

Coming up later this Fall, athletes, families and fans are welcome to join us at a Springfield Thunderbirds ice hockey game and “Team Up for Brain Injury Awareness” and help raise insight around prevention, education, advocacy and support. Watch the calendar for more information or call the Western office at (413) 443-0200.

Upcoming Western Region Events

- **Walk & Roll for Brain Injury**: Saturday, September 9, 9:30 a.m. at the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, Farnams Road, Cheshire, MA 01225. Register online www.biama.org/walk.

- **Bowling**: Date tbd at Cove Bowl, 109 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington.

- **CATA Visual Art Classes**: Date & location tbd. Cost $10.

- **Nightmare on Elm Street**: Date tbd at BIA-MA, 180 Elm Street, Suite C, Pittsfield. Wear your favorite costume and share a spooky time with other survivors. Cost is $3.

- **Harvest Luncheon**: Saturday, November 4th at 3 Country Club Road, Holyoke. Spend an afternoon with friends at the first annual luncheon on the “other side of the mountain. Cost is $10.

- **Springfield Thunderbirds - Brain Injury Awareness Day**: Sunday, November 12th at 1277 Main Street, Springfield. Love hockey? Come spend the afternoon watching the Springfield Thunderbirds vs the Providence Bruins. Cost is $5.

- **Hibachi Luncheon**: Date tbd at Enso Hibachi, 1035 South Street, Pittsfield. An afternoon experiencing the cooking at a hibachi table. Cost is $5.

For more information or to make reservations contact the Western Regional Office at 413-443-0200 or visit [www.biama.org/westernregion](http://www.biama.org/westernregion)

*Sponsored in part by the Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission*
Return to Learn!
By Amiee Duffy (reprinted with permission from TBI Hope & Inspiration)

I was fortunate to be able to attend the 36th Annual Brain Injury Conference in Massachusetts on March 30, 2017. What a positive experience! I would highly recommend survivors of TBI, as well as caregivers, attend. The experience of being in one place with so many others who “get it” was truly amazing and rejuvenating.

The day began on the highest note possible for me as the keynote speaker was Stacia Bissell, MEd, and Stacia’s story is similar to my own in so many ways. As a fellow educator, I was nodding my head in agreement throughout her speech. I too told my doctor and employer that I would return to work after two weeks and was also shocked at the sensory overload I experienced after returning to teach, seven months later.

Two of the three sessions I attended were informative as well. I was able to gain quite a bit of useful knowledge in “Why Less is More: Cognitive and Executive Functioning Aids,” and “Meditation and the Brain.” Both of these sessions will not only continue to help me in my own recovery but will benefit the students in my classroom.

As I drove home from the conference, I had a renewed commitment to educating others on the effects of mTBI. So many people have little knowledge in this area. I am not only referring to lay people, but physicians, neuropsychologists, and educators as well. As an educator who suffered an mTBI and was able to return to work, I am in a unique position. I had a period in my life where I was able to learn quickly and focus effortlessly. Unfortunately, since my motor vehicle accident that is no longer the case.

I would love to have my old brain back. I would spoil her with encouragement and praise for all the hard work she did on a regular basis. However, even as every month or two seems to bring some improvement to my mTBI symptoms, I realize that my previous brain is gone for good. That does not mean that the experiences I have had with my new brain can’t do some good.

I have had the experience of feeling stupid. I have been asked in a slow, loud voice with enunciated speech, “Do you need help?” by a cashier at a supermarket.

I have had the experience of returning to work and having colleagues and former friends talk about me behind my back, and even question me to my face, about whether I really needed that time “off” or make comments such as, “It must have been nice to have such a long vacation.” Some of the time I would attempt to educate them, other times I would just sit back and marvel at how true it is that you can have decades of great work performance, but in the end, there are often people just waiting for you to slip up.

I have had the experience of sensory issues. I now know what my students experience when they are dealing with florescent lighting, the acoustics in loud cafeterias and gymnasiums, crowded hallways, and varying temperature.

“As an educator who suffered an mTBI and was able to return to work, I am in a unique position.”

continued on next page
changes from classroom to classroom.

I fully understand wanting to wear your hood up on your sweatshirt and to think it is not enjoyable to attend a band concert in the gym. I have had the experience of poor executive functioning and lack of focus and sustained attention. I have walked in circles in my kitchen and had no idea where to begin in order to cook my family’s dinner. I have run the washing machine without clothes in it. I have cooked salad in the microwave. I have misplaced or “lost” items more often than I care to admit.

My job as an educator who has returned to work after sustaining an mTBI is to do good things with the knowledge I have gained through my experience. I already am more sensitive to the needs of individual learners in my classroom. I have taken classes and read books on trauma, sensory processing disorder, anxiety, and meditation in the classroom. I have no doubt that the strategies I am teaching my students will benefit them throughout their school careers.

The next challenge is to use my position as an educator who has returned to work to advocate for students who are Returning to Learn. There is much information on Return to Play, as there should be.

There really is not a set policy on students returning to learn in their classrooms. I believe that most educators have limited knowledge about what accommodations to make in their teaching practices and how to best accommodate students who are returning to school after a concussion.

I am looking forward to helping design and deliver professional development to educators on “return to learn” strategies after a student suffers a concussion.
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts gratefully acknowledges the following gifts from our generous contributors received between April 1, 2017 and June 31, 2017

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Upcoming BIA-MA Events

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- Framingham State University: September 24, 2017

Acquired Brain Injury Series Courses
- Substance Abuse & ABI: September 26, 2017
- NeuroBehavioral Disorders: October 18, 2017
- Functional NeuroAnatomy: November 15, 2017

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

YOUR BIA-MA SUMMER 2017 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!!