

# Arkansas Brain Injury Council (ABIC) Quarterly Meeting

## May 10, 2022 | 10am

### **Council Members in Attendance**

Anthony Thornton RN, FP-C, EMT-P, CCP-C (Chair, Person Living with TBI)  
Cassandra Daugherty, MS, CRC (Vice-Chair, Vocational Rehab Counselor, AR Rehab Services)  
Charlotte Bishop (State Long Term Care Ombudsman, Adult Behavioral Services, DHS)  
Amy Goddard, MS, OTR/L, CBIS (Consultant for Students with Brain Injury, AR Dept. of Ed.)  
Stacy Gravett, MA, CRC (Vocational Rehab Counselor, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services)  
Keith Handcock (Author, Advocate, Person living with TBI)  
Laura Haskett, BA (Business Administration, Retired, Person Living with TBI)  
Kristie Hayes (Business Operations Manager, Division of Medical Services, DHS)  
Tracy Hobbs (Criminal Justice, Retired; Building non-profit for TBIs and PTSD)  
Josh Moody (Software and Web Developer, Entrepreneur, Person Living with TBI)  
Cendy Nowlin (Caregiver of Person Living with TBI)  
Dr. Valerie U. Oji, PharmD, BCPP (Director/Clinical Pharmacologist, MedCentre PLLC; Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine)  
Joe Page III, MSCJ (Warden, Arkansas Department of Correction, Person Living with TBI)  
Susan Pierce (Director of Policy and Planning, Disability Rights Arkansas)  
Morgan Purkiss, PT, DPT, CBIS (Therapy Coordinator, Easterseals Arkansas)  
Constance Tullis, LMSW (Social Work Intern, TRRP, UAMS, Person Living with TBI)  
Kelly Urban, PhD, Med, RN, CCRN-K, TCRN (Education Outreach & Injury Prevention Coordinator, Trauma Program, UAMS)  
Melissa Weitekamp, MS, CRC, CBIS (Clinical Evaluator, NeuroRestorative Timber Ridge)

### **Others in Attendance**

Daniel Bercher, PhD, NRP, CBIS (Assistant Director, TRRP, UAMS)  
Kristen Alexander, MPH, MPS (Program Manager, TRRP, UAMS)  
Dianne Campbell, LCSW (Care Coordinator, TRRP, UAMS)  
Amber Watson, MBA (Project Manager, TRRP, UAMS)  
Edward Williams, BSN, CBIS (Nurse Educator, TRRP, UAMS)

### **Call to Order**

Dr. Daniel Bercher called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

### **Previous Meeting Minutes**

Minutes for February 8, 2022 meeting were approved with no requested changes.

## **History of the Trauma Rehabilitation Resources Program**

Dr. Daniel Bercher gave an overview of the program and its history.

- ***History of Trauma Rehabilitation Resources Program***
  - Spinal cord commission established in 1975 via statute
  - Brain Injury Alliance of Arkansas established 1986
    - Act 491 of 1986 setup
    - Voluntary referrals for TBI
  - Arkansas Trauma System established July 1, 2009
    - Included \$500,000 for rehabilitation
    - Established Trauma system front end activities
    - Trauma System Rules and Regulations
  - ADH Proposal and contract with ASCC to conduct research studies on rehabilitation
    - Rehabilitation Center study (Tilford)
    - Resources Survey
  - ADH Trauma contracted with ASCC for trauma rehabilitation
    - Arkansas had a high mortality rate from traumas
    - Overall goal was to improve training and funding to improve the system to reduce mortality rates from trauma
    - Arkansas Trauma Rehabilitation est. 2012 in ASCC
      - Staff included a manager, an admin and a health educator
      - Trauma Rehab Committee est. ~2011
      - MOA was established with BIAA on March 29, 2013
  - ASCC ended contract for Trauma Rehab with ADH after FY2017
    - Requested Trauma Rehab move to UAMS
  - UAMS setup grant with ADH for FY2018
    - MOA was established with UAMS on September 7, 2017
- ***History of TBI Registry***
  - Registry information was transferred to UAMS from ASCC after the program's transition
  - Original referrals were either faxed or mailed in
  - TBI Registry has been modernized into a digital registry currently housed at UAMS
  - Registry was developed for moderate to severe TBIs and does not include mild brain injury or concussions at this time

## **Council Member Orientation**

- Dr. Bercher previously sent a document to the committee with tips for serving on a council and being an engaged member
  - Document was written by persons living with TBI

- If any members need any accommodations (shorter meeting, breaks, etc.) in order to assist in the conversation, please bring up to the ABIC or Dr. Bercher.
- If members have any ideas to change or improve the council, it is encouraged that you share your ideas.

### **Meeting with Congressman Womack and Senator Bozeman**

- Meeting was sponsored by NASHIA (National Association of State Head Injury Administrators)
  - NASHIA is a federal non-profit
  - NASHIA provides the Administration for Community Living (ACL) grant
  - Dianne Campbell, Care Coordinator for persons living with TBI, is funded through this grant
- Purpose of the meeting was to push legislators to support the ACL grant
- Several representatives from the ABIC attended
  - Representatives had the chance to share their story with Womack and Bozeman.

### **Arkansas Brain Injury Alliance/Association**

- Arkansas does not currently have a Brain Injury Association or Alliance.
- Goal is to set up an alliance or association in order to have a separate entity that can advocate for policy changes in Arkansas.
  - Jensyn Hallett and Laura Haskett have taken on the task to try to set up one of these for Arkansas
    - Will involve fundraising to pay the national fees
    - Both Jensyn Hallett and Laura Haskett have the experience and skills for fundraising
  - Meetings have been set up with both organizations

### **Pediatric Subcommittee**

Morgan Purkiss provided an update on the Pediatric Subcommittee

- First subcommittee meeting was held on April 26, 2022
  - Plan is to meet quarterly
- Had a good turnout
- Representatives from many different professions (physicians, neuropsychologists, school district representatives, athletic trainers, nurses, parents etc.)
  - Kristen Alexander and Amy Goddard have worked to recruit and identify stakeholders across the state that are involved in all aspects of a student's trajectory (medical, school personnel, etc.)
  - Need representation from rural school districts

- Need representation from Arkansas Children's Hospital's education department in order to make sure there is a continuum of care when pediatric patients are discharged
- Need counselors/school counselors
- Had discussions about the state of pediatric TBI
  - Need improvements in pediatric reporting
- A big concern is continuity of care. Children with TBI's will become adults with TBI's.

### **Return to Learn**

Amy Goddard provided an update for Return to Learn

- Arkansas has Return to Play legislation already in place
- Return to Learn draft is being reviewed with a goal of being able to include along with Return to Play.
- Coaching the Little Rock School District with installing a brain injury team under the guidance of Center for Brain Injury Training and Research, one of CDC's model programs out of Oregon.

### **NASHIA Memberships**

- NASHIA now has a new category of memberships for advisory board members
- ACL grant will fund 2 memberships
  - Tracy Hobbs and Jensyn Hallett will be obtaining these memberships
- Will give the ability to speak with other advisory board members across the country to be able to take notes and see what other boards are doing

### **U of A Clinton School Presentation**

- Project asked the question what a TBI Medicaid waiver would look like for Arkansas
- Referenced other states that have TBI Medicaid waivers
- Found that an advocacy group is needed (Brain Injury Alliance or Association)
- The recording, slides, and report will be provided to the council once obtained

### **TBI Model Systems Grant Application**

- \$500,000 research grant awarded to only 16 sites around the country
- Some very prestigious places have been awarded this grant including Harvard Medical School, Shepherd Center (in certain years), Craig Hospital
- In order to qualify for the grant, a minimum of 33 TBI patients' data must be submitted annually to the national TBI Model System in order to query the patients on how life is going, to track progress, problems, successes, failures, etc.
- Looking into a physiatrist option
  - In Arkansas, TBI patients are not seen by a physiatrist in the acute care setting

- Studies have found that involvement from a physiatrist early on can change the trajectory of outcomes for the patients
- Module portion of the grant application
  - Look at referral system to find out the nature of denials (lack of insurance, etc.)
  - Area needs to be studied in order to make improvements

### **Program Branding**

- Trauma Rehabilitation Resources Program is looking to change their branding to something more recognizable and less confusing
- If anyone has any suggestions for program names, reach out to Dr. Bercher.
- Official name will have to be approved through UAMS

### **As May Occur**

- TRRP was recently featured on a radio program with Disability Rights Arkansas on KABF
  - Dr. Bercher, Kristen Alexander, Eddie Williams, Dianne Campbell, Constance Tullis and Tony Thornton were all in attendance.
  - Was interviewed about the plights of TBI in Arkansas

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Daniel Bercher called the meeting adjourned at 11:04 am. Next meeting will be held on August 9, 2022 from 10:00 – 11:30 AM.