



Continuum of Care: Provide Resource Facilitation for Brain Injury Survivors in New York State

Brain Injury is a public health issue impacting millions of New Yorkers every day. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) alone outnumbers spinal cord injury, HIV/AIDS, breast cancer and multiple sclerosis diagnoses combined. Anyone at anytime, anywhere can sustain a brain injury.

People with a brain injury are often left with complex problems due to the nature of their injury. Common issues include challenges with cognition, memory and/or behavioral problems, as well as physical disabilities. These challenges make managing day to day life more difficult. **The unique problems that each person experiences, coupled with the lack of understanding of how brain injury manifests, makes community reintegration a challenge for many survivors.**

In the past three years with the COVID-19 pandemic, studies are showing that there are prolonged neurological clinical consequences related to COVID-19. A study published in The Lancet Psychiatry shows that as many as 1 in 3 COVID-19 survivors experience a mental health or neurological disorder within six months of a coronavirus infection. Now is the time to give this community a program to help them success after a brain injury.

Navigating the confusing structure of assistance programs, resources and benefit options can be complicated for anyone, let alone someone recovering from a brain injury. New York needs a resource facilitation system that helps brain injury survivors effectively and efficiently. This system needs to be managed by people with experience in helping survivors and meeting their unique needs.

New York needs the Continuum of Care program to coordinate services for brain injury survivors.

The Continuum of Care will establish a resource facilitation and care management program to address the needs of brain injury survivors, their families and caregivers. This will ensure that New Yorkers recovering from a brain injury receive the absolute best care and assistance available. Survivors, families and caregivers will have the information they need and will be connected to doctors, rehabilitation services and other community-based services, improving outcomes and preventing unnecessary hospitalizations and medical care.

Prevention and Outreach

The prevention and outreach aspect of the Continuum of Care program will focus on preventing brain injuries while connecting survivors to resources. Specifically, it will:

- Create a brain injury prevention public awareness campaign.

- Provide outreach to target populations, including youth sports, older adults and adults sustaining concussions, among others
- Create collateral informational materials including publications on brain injury for discharge planners to distribute to patients
- Host webinars on fall prevention, recognizing brain injury and proper understanding of brain injury
- Be a hub for providers, community-based organizations and other entities, enabling them to reach brain injury survivors and families
- Perform a needs assessment to gather data on brain injury incidence, severity and financial impact in New York State, and to identify gaps in services
- Provide training to doctors who treat patients with brain injury
- Educate community-based providers with specific training on brain injury and why survivors need specialized services
- Host a conference for rehabilitation team members, including medical providers and discharge planners, on best practices for recognition, treatment, rehabilitation and assisting people with brain injury in accessing community-based support services and
- Network with medical and rehabilitation facilities to reach people with brain injury

Support Services

The Continuum of Care program will establish a care management program providing support services to people with brain injury, with the goal of returning them to the least restrictive setting in their communities with all needed services in place. It will:

- Create a centralized location at the Brain Injury Association of New York State to guide brain injury survivors through their recovery journey
- Provide care managers to support survivors and their families by helping them access needed medical and rehabilitation services
- Provide a connection to Brain Injury Association of New York State (BIANYS) chapters and support groups, which can be vital to ongoing recovery
- Keep brain injury survivors healthy and at home, with all members of the care team kept aware of and engaged in the care management process and
- Help people with mild brain injury (ie, concussion) access needed rehabilitation services

BIANYS is uniquely positioned to administer the resource facilitation and care management that the Continuum of Care program would bring. BIANYS has served the brain injury community for the last **forty years** and is recognized as a resource for brain injury information, training and support services. The existing Family Advocacy, Counseling, and Training Services (FACTS) Program provides support to survivors and their families, advocating for care and community services, working together to ensure that the best plan is in place. The Continuum of Care program will build on the expertise of the current FACTS Program, making services available for survivors that sustained their injury after age of 22 that are not on a Waiver program.

The Continuum of Care program will make a significant difference in the lives of everyone impacted by brain injury, making New York State a national leader in brain injury treatment, rehabilitation and care coordination.

For more information:

Christina LeBeau

clebeau@bianys.org

(518) 459-7911

January 19, 2022