



2024 Legislative and Community Priorities

Brain injuries affect at least 2.5 million children and adults in the U.S. each year. Any brain injury, regardless of severity, can change the way a person thinks, acts, moves and feels. Even so-called “mild” injuries can have devastating consequences that require intensive treatment and long-term care. New Yorkers with brain injuries face many problems on their journey to recovery, often falling through the cracks of the health care system when their injuries are misdiagnosed and misunderstood.

BIANYS advocates for brain injury survivors so that everyone has access to the services they need. The following are just a few of the issues we are working on in 2024. We are always approaching new issues as they arise as well.

Continuum of Care for Resource Facilitation

We thank the legislature for adding \$300,000 to their FY 2024 budget last year, but more needs to be done. New Yorkers with brain injuries deserve to get the help they need from the time of their injury to the time they integrate back into their community. So many brain injury survivors and their families are left to their own devices to make decisions on continued services and care taking requirements. BIANYS is asking for a total of \$1 million in the Executive Budget to address the needs of the brain injury survivor and caretakers.

To date, BIANYS has laid the groundwork for this program by purchasing a state-of-the-art database that can be sure our Association is giving the proper resources and fulfilling the needs of our community. We will be able to follow up with the people that contact us as well as be able to collect data on the needs and accomplishments of brain injury survivors and caregivers. We have worked out a staffing structure for the program as well as planned education for medical personnel throughout the state and setting up privacy policies for the people we serve. But more is needed.

The additional funds would get the proper human resources and resource facilitation staff in place to address the needs of brain injury survivors, their families and caregivers. With these additional funds, we 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 minimizing medical complications. Necessary services which prove to be unavailable will be tracked in detail, to enable policymakers to develop such services to meet New Yorkers’ needs.

Pass S3184/A1977 The Concussion Management Awareness Improvement Act

The 2011 Concussion Management Awareness Act should be updated to focus on identifying and implementing paths to achieve a successful return to education for all New York students that have sustained a concussion. These changes will address the current disparate nature of brain injury services and strengthen advisory and coordination channels.

Proposed changes include:

1. Mandate Concussion Management Teams in all school districts.
2. Require academic Return-to-Learn policies such as having a student return to a full class schedule without academic adjustments or accommodations.

3. Require continuing medical education to be completed every two years by school coaches, physical education teachers, nurses, athletic trainers, all medical directors, physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.
4. Recommend schools to retain access to an Athletic Trainer to all students.
5. Identify and report annually the number of concussions that occur each year to applicable district superintendent or chief school officer, board of education or governing body.

Funding for Concussion Outreach Prevention & Education (COPE)

A recent JAMA research study showed 61% of athletes with concussion took more than 30 days to recover. More than 50% of these athletes did not receive care for their injury beyond an initial evaluation or diagnosis at or near the time of injury, which could be why they took so long to recover. New York State is behind the curve when it comes to concussion education and prevention for our students. We are asking the Legislature to include a total of \$175,000.00 for COPE in the FY 24-25 budget.

1. The partnership between the Brain Injury Association of New York State and New York State Athletic Trainers Association for the COPE program is to recognize concussion signs and symptoms, prevent concussions and their impact on activity, athletes' ability to understand and learn, interact in educational and social settings, and to contribute to society in general.
2. COPE provides valuable information to all schools in New York, regardless if they are public or private (and under current concussion management protocols).
3. NYSATA and BIANYS have a large number of contacts and relationships and are well-situated to distribute information, educate, and reach an achievable goal.
4. NYSATA plays a strong role in recognizing concussion, managing recovery and eventual return to play.
5. BIANYS already has the Supporting Students Recovering from Concussion: Return to Learn program in place.
6. COPE will commence outreach to school districts and state high school sections and develop educational materials to bring schools, coaches, athletes, and parents/guardians together to create a plan for a successful return to the classroom.

Community Priorities

BIANYS is also working on the many issues that confront the brain injury community daily. We continue to monitor introduction into the State Legislature and continued contact with State Agencies. In addition to the legislative priorities, we are working on the following issues as well:

- Keeping the TBI Waiver Outside of Managed Programs
- Community Housing
- Increase Services

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THE VOICE OF BRAIN INJURY
