



2025 Legislative and Community Priorities

The Brain Injury Association of New York State (BIANYS) advocates for brain injury survivors to help them access necessary services as they live with brain injuries. Each day, approximately 157 traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) occur in New York State. Annually, nearly 4,000 New York children age 19 and younger are treated for sports-related TBIs, and more than 2,200 New Yorkers die from TBIs. Any brain injury, regardless of severity, can change the way a person thinks, acts, moves, and feels. 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 is committed to increasing access to care for those impacted by brain injuries.

The following are our top legislative priorities for 2025.

Continuum of Care for Neuro-Resource Facilitation

Last year, the FY 2024-2025 budget included \$300,000 for BIANYS Continuum of Care for Neuro-Resource Facilities. This crucial program assists New Yorkers recovering from a brain injury and offers community support services to those impacted. While this funding is crucial, it is simply not enough. This year, we are seeking \$1 million in the final budget to fully address the needs of individuals impacted by brain injury and their caretakers.

To date, BIANYS has laid the groundwork for this program and 35 New Yorkers are now enrolled from 22 different counties. Once enrolled, a brain injury survivor and the care team establish goals and criteria for follow up. BIANYS has established a staffing structure for the program throughout New York. Additionally, BIANYS has created educational programs for New York medical personnel regarding continuing care for brain injury survivors.

The requested funds would finance additional resource facilitation staff to address not only the needs of brain injury survivors, but their families and caregivers. 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 are unavailable will be tracked in detail, enabling policymakers to develop such services to meet New Yorkers' needs.

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. Including \$1 million in the final budget will help those impacted by such traumatic changes get back on their feet.

Pass Legislation to Update School Concussion Management and Response Protocols

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 strengthen advisory and coordination channels. Proposed changes include:

1. If any pupil believed to have sustained or who has sustained a mild traumatic brain injury will not resume athletic activity until they have been symptom free for at least twenty-four hours, has returned to a full class schedule without academic accommodations made due to the mild traumatic brain injury, and has been evaluated by and received written and signed authorization from a licensed physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner.
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.

Funding for Concussion Outreach Prevention & Education (COPE)

For years, New York was behind the curve regarding concussion education and prevention for our students. BIANYS has successfully educated over 300 people over the last two years on concussions. BIANYS is looking to continue this education throughout New York to communities as well as professional medical personnel. To do so, we are requesting \$150,000 for COPE in the FY 25-26 budget.

1. Our partnership with the NYS Athletic Trainers Association for COPE helps to recognize concussion signs and symptoms. Additionally, it helps prevent concussions and their impact on athletes' ability to understand, learn, and 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 of if they are public or private (and under current concussion management protocols).
3. 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 legislative bill introductions and continued contact with State Agencies. In addition to the legislative priorities, we are working on the following issues:

- Keeping the TBI Waiver Outside of Managed Programs
- Community Housing
- Increase Services
- CDPAP regulations
- Waiver improvements
- Transportation Issues

For more information:

Christina Lebeau
CLeBeau@bianys.org
518-459-7911

THE VOICE OF BRAIN INJURY