



PRESS RELEASE

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Brain Injury Association of California Sponsors Legislation

To Ensure Appropriate Insurance Coverage of Acquired Brain Injury

Senate Bill 320 Will Provide Uniform Access to Specialized Treatment Across the State

(BAKERSFIELD, CA – February 19, 2013) – To provide appropriate insurance coverage and medical care for acquired brain injury survivors in the state, the Brain Injury Association of California (BIACAL), is sponsoring Senate Bill 320 (Beall, D-San Jose), the Brain Injury Access to Treatment Act (BIATA).

Senate Bill 320 will enable access to treatment of acquired brain injury across a spectrum of specialized licensed facilities that offer cost-effective care in California. Enactment would ensure coverage on par with other major medical conditions, which have no time limitations on treatment.

Current rehabilitation provisions have set restrictions and are intended for orthopedic conditions, rather than neurologic injury. As a result, patients can incur physical, mental and financial hardships that also affect their families, the workplace, and the community.

“Many patients are left with various levels of disease and disability, due to inconsistent access to treatment,” said Mark J. Ashley, Sc.D., CBIST, and chairman of the board of directors of BIACAL. “Without proper care, they can become disabled, indigent, and impoverished. Institutionalization then places a huge financial burden on the public sector.”

Passage of Senate Bill 320 would enhance opportunities for brain injury recovery, as observed in such examples as Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and ABC reporter Bob Woodruff. Both have shown what is possible with proper access, timing, and duration of treatment.

“We want the same successful outcome for every person in California who suffers from acquired brain injury,” Dr. Ashley said.

Acquired brain injury is an alteration in brain function initiated by an external force or a vascular, toxic, metabolic or infectious cause. More than 100,000 Californians visit emergency rooms annually for traumatic brain injury and 25 percent do not return to work. Denial of treatment increases the state deficit by shifting costs to public health and government programs.

Current policy language promotes denial of highly specialized acute and postacute rehabilitation. BIATA will grant patients access to the most effective neurologic recovery and achieve the greatest reduction of disability.

About the Brain Injury Association of California

The Brain Injury Association of California (BIACAL) is a non-profit organization and chartered state affiliate of the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA). Founded in 2005, BIACAL serves Californians by providing information and resources, education, prevention and awareness, and legislative advocacy. BIACAL’s mission is to be the voice of brain injury. Visit biacal.org for more information.

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