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A blow or jolt to the head can result in a traumatic brain Injury (TBI), which can disrupt the function of the brain.⁵

Each year in the United States, an estimated 1.4 million people sustain a TBI,⁶ and 80,000 to 90,000 people experience the onset of long-term disability associated with a TBI.⁷

Direct medical costs and indirect costs (such as lost productivity) of TBI totaled an estimated \$56.3 billion in the United States in 1995.⁸

Soldiers with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Problem:

Brain injuries occur during combat. From previous wars it has been estimated that approximately 20% of all military casualties have sustained a brain injury.¹

The rate of brain injuries in soldiers returning from the Middle East appears to be higher than expected.

Blast injuries can result in a TBI. Soldiers in both Iraq and Afghanistan are at risk for blast injuries from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rocket-propelled grenades and land mines. It has been estimated that over 50% of all combat injuries are blast injuries.²

During four months in 2003 the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program (DVHIP) at Walter Reed Army Medical Center screened 155 injured soldiers who had returned from Iraq and were deemed as being at risk for brain injury.³

62% of the soldiers screened were found to have a brain injury.⁴

A brain injury can last a lifetime.

Needs:

- * Increase support for the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program (DVHIP) at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.
- * Ensure continued TBI screening for all soldiers returning from combat.
- * Increase availability and access to on-going community based services.
- * Increase Case Management services to survivors of TBI.
- * Expand efforts to educate the public about TBI.

How can Congress help support our soldiers?

- * Provide an additional **\$7 million** for DVHIP in the Department of Defense (DOD) appropriations bill for FY 2006.

Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program facts:

Established in 1992 as the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program and frequently referred to as the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC).

The Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program's mission is to serve active duty military, their dependents and veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) through state-of-the-art medical care, innovative clinical research initiatives, and educational programs.

DVHIP is:

- * A multi-site medical care, clinical research and education center;
- * A unique collaboration of the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system and a civilian partner;
- * Funded through the Department of Defense.

DVHIP has its headquarters at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC and provides services through seven military (including Walter Reed) and VA sites and one civilian treatment site.

For more information about DVHIP visit their website at www.dvbic.org or call 800-870-9244.

Brain Injury Association of America (703-761-0750)
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (301-656-3500)
National Brain Injury Research, Treatment & Training Foundation (434-984-5218)



¹ ARNEWS (Army News Service), Spc. Chuck Wagner, Nov. 24, 2003, "Brain Injuries High Among Iraq Casualties"

² DVBIC website on blast injury, <http://www.dvbic.org/blastinjury.html>.

³ DVBIC website on blast injury, <http://www.dvbic.org/blastinjury.html>, citing Coupland & Meddings, 1999.

⁴ DVBIC website on blast injury, <http://www.dvbic.org/blastinjury.html>.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control, Injury Prevention, Traumatic Brain Injury - Fact Sheet, 6/1/2004.

⁶ Langlois et al. 2004.

⁷ Thurman D, Alverson C, Dunn K, Guerrero J, Sniezek J. Traumatic brain injury in the United States: a public health perspective. *J Head Trauma Rehabil* 1999;14(6):602-15.

⁸ Thurman D. The epidemiology and economics of head trauma. In: Miller L, Hayes R, editors. *Head Trauma: Basic, Preclinical, and Clinical Directions*. New York (NY): Wiley and Sons; 2001.