



**Texas Brain Injury Advisory
Council Report to the Health and
Human Services Commission
Executive Commissioner**

Sep 1, 2020 to Aug 31, 2021

As Required by

TAC §351.825(d)(1)

Texas Brain Injury

Advisory Council

November 2021

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Disclaimer

This report was prepared by members of the Texas Brain Injury Advisory Council. The opinions and recommendations expressed in this report are the members' own and do not reflect the views of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Executive Council or the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Background

In 2003, the 78th Texas Legislature established the Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council in 2003. In 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature removed most Health and Human Services advisory councils from statute and authorized the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish advisory councils by rule. The Texas Brain Injury Advisory Council (TBIAC) was created in rule on July 1, 2016. The scope of the Council was expanded to include all acquired brain injuries. TBIAC advises HHSC and state leaders on the prevention of brain injury and improving the quality of life of individuals who have survived brain injuries and their families and caregivers. The TBIAC:

- Informs state leadership (the Governor and Legislature) of the needs of people with brain injuries and their families.
- Recommends policies and practices to meet those needs.
- Encourages research into the causes, prevention, and treatment of brain injuries.
- Provides long-term services and supports for people with brain injuries.
- Promotes brain injury prevention and awareness throughout the state.
- Facilitates the development and implementation of sustainable supports and services to meet the complex needs of persons who have survived a brain injury.

Council Dates and Attendance

The following table includes a listing of Texas Brain Injury Advisory Council meeting dates and attendance (Y=attended, N=did not attend, NA=not applicable).

Member	Category	10/19/2020	01/25/2021	04/19/2021	07/19/2021
Whitney Bailey	Lived Experience	Y	Y	N	N
Marivel Baysden	Family Member	N	N	N	Y
Heather Cook	Family Member	Y	Y	Y	Y
Patti Foster	Lived Experience	Y	Y	Y	Y
Donna Kunz	Lived Experience	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sandra McKnight	Family Member	N	N	N	N/A
James Moody	Healthcare Practitioner	Y	N	N	N
Austin Morgan	Lived Experience 18-26	Y	Y	Y	N
Benjamin Nguyen	Lived Experience	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mikael Simpson	Stroke Stakeholder	Y	Y	Y	N
Maritza Padilla	Post-Acute Care	Y	Y	N	Y
Jennifer Patterson	Family Member	Y	N	Y	Y
John Thottakara	Acute Hospital	Y	Y	Y	N
Donna Tiemeyer	Long-Term Care	Y	Y	Y	N
George Wolf	Higher Education	Y	Y	Y	Y

Council Actions and Accomplishments

The Texas Brain Injury Advisory Council is the only State of Texas entity exclusively dedicated to serving Texans with acquired brain injuries, their families, service providers, and state agencies. Through its 17 years of service to Texas, the TBIAC helps the State improve and expand services to Texans with brain injuries and their caregivers. Among these are:

- Improve and expand the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Service program.
- Develop an insurance mandate that requires health insurers to meet the needs of individuals with brain injury.
- Add Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy to Medicaid Waiver Programs.
- Assist the Texas Education Agency to help Texas schools better serve students with brain injuries.
- Help the Texas Juvenile Justice System better identify and serve young offenders with brain injuries.
- Help establish laws that protect Texas drivers diagnosed with autism, deaf, and hard of hearing.
- Improve de-escalation training for officers by providing brain injury training for first responders.
- Promote prevention of brain injuries through use of bicycle helmets, helmets in rodeos, and use of concussion protocols in school athletics.
- Help the Department of State Health Services maintain and improve a brain injury registry with data to inform policy makers about the needs of Texans with brain injuries and their families.
- Reviewed HB 4533 passed in 2019 and to amend Government Code Chapter 534 as follows:
 - Development and implementation of a pilot through the STAR+PLUS Medicaid managed care program to test person-centered managed care strategies and improvements based on capitation;
 - Establishment of a Pilot Program Workgroup (PPW) to help develop and advise HHSC on the operation of the pilot program;
 - Coordination and collaboration throughout development and

implementation of the pilot program with the Intellectual Developmental Disabilities System Redesign Advisory Committee (IDD SRAC) and PPW; and

- Dental evaluation to determine the most cost-effective dental services for pilot program participants.

2021 TBIAC Accomplishments, Sep 1, 2020 to Aug 31, 2021:

- Supported and educated for continued full funding for the Office of Acquired Brain Injury.
- Provided subject matter expertise and referrals to the Office of Acquired Brain Injury and other Health and Human Services Commission offices.
- Improved brain injury awareness through various brain injury non-profits around the state, including Hope After Brain Injury, Hope Behavioral Health and many more, as well as educating and encouraging Texans about life after brain injury through speaking on television, radio, podcast platforms, social media, churches, community organizations, city events, law enforcement events sponsored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, trainings of Texas Police Cadets, etc. to help brain injury families and survivors learn how to cope with the changes of life after brain injury.
- Developed position statement on universal helmet use for motorcyclists.
- Reviewed and revised TBIAC bylaws in preparation for vote in 2021.
- Developing project plans for educating acute care hospitals on resources available to brain injured patients.
- Continued collaboration efforts with non-profit organizations who also support brain injury survivors.
- Provided member presenters for the Virtual March Brain Injury Awareness Month Celebration at the Texas Health and Human Services.
- Successfully obtained a proclamation from Governor Greg Abbott declaring March as Brain Injury Awareness Month.
- Each committee is working to document goals for the year and project plans to accomplish those goals.

Fiscal Year 2021 TBIAC Committees

The TBIAC has three committees: Legislative and Policy Committee, Education and Awareness and Services and Supports Committee, and the Database Review Committee.

The **Legislative and Policy Committee** meets on a quarterly basis to follow and/or identify legislation that may impact Texas brain injury services, prepare position papers, and provide resource information as requested.

The Committee Chair is Dr. John Thottakara. Current committee members are: Heather Cook, Maritza Padilla, Donna Tiemeyer, and Dr. George Wolf.

The **Education and Awareness and Services and Supports Committee** meets quarterly to provide input regarding appropriate services and supports for Texans with a brain injury to enhance health, recovery, and living with a brain injury. In addition, this committee identifies gaps and opportunities to provide effective and timely information, education, and training regarding prevention and resources to improve outcomes and help survivors and families.

The Committee Chair is Patti Foster. Current committee members are Marivel Baysden, Donna Kunz, Maritza Padilla, Austin Morgan, and Dr. Benjamin Nguyen.

The **Database Review Committee (DRC)** meets quarterly to identify and review current database collections in order to evaluate and make recommendations to more accurately collect brain injury data. Committee members chose three brain injury related ICD-10 codes or areas of interest, including non-traumatic etiologies. These codes will focus on different etiologies for database requests. Members were given a templates and database tutorial to expedite their information requests. The DRC also had presentations during the quarterly meeting to familiarize members with Texas databases and points of contact.

The Committee Chair is Dr. George Wolf. Current committee members are Whitney Bailey, Donna Kunz, James Moody, Jennifer Patterson, and Mikael Simpson.

TBIAC members focused on activities to promote brain injury awareness, education, health promotion, and prevention. Council activities are summarized below

1. Council members provided subject matter expert testimony and education to improve the lives of those living with brain injury. Council members frequently participate in activities to promote education and awareness as a private citizen and on occasion as a representative of the Council. A few examples are listed below:
 - Patti Foster, Person with lived experience provided lectures, presentations, and appearances at Hope After Brain Injury, Hope Behavioral Health and many more, as well as educating and encouraging Texans about life after brain injury through speaking on television, radio, podcast platforms, social media, churches, community organizations, city events, law enforcement events sponsored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, trainings of Texas Police Cadets, etc. to help brain injury families and survivors learn how to cope with the changes of life after brain injury.
 - Participated in and made educational presentations to various support groups and state advocacy organizations.

2. TBIAC received quarterly updates from OABI and HHSC staff regarding events related to brain injury, brain injury programs, processes, and the state budget. These invaluable updates provided opportunities for collaboration and council assistance to educate others on important programs and services offered by the state and to increase awareness regarding areas of focus to enhance brain injury recovery. A few examples are listed below:
 - Mrs. Ramsay Pierce, Love Your Brain – Overview of what Love Your Brain does for individuals affected by brain injuries.
 - Mrs. Mary Bishop, LMSW, Health and Services, Person Centered Practices Team Lead – Overview of Peer to Peer Models in Texas to help develop Family Navigator project.
 - Mr. Noah Abdenour, Director of peer to Peer for Behavioral Health & Substance Abuse - Overview of Peer to Peer Models in Texas to help develop Family Navigator project.
 - Mr. Jeff Garrison-Tate, M.Ed. UT Texas Center for Disability Studies - Overview of Peer to Peer Models in Texas to help develop Family Navigator project.
 - Mr. Ron Scoggins, Manager, Texas Veterans Commission, Veterans Mental

Health Department Manager and Peer Coordinator - Overview of Peer to Peer Models in Texas to help develop Family Navigator project.

- Ms. Christine Medeiros, LPC, NCC, Brain Injury Programs Manager, Health Developmental and Independence Services, Health and Human Services Commission - Update on NCAPPS Peer to Peer Support Subcommittee including Certified Family Partners in behavioral health, Seeking persons with lived experience on workgroups.
- Mr. Joe Derrick, Caregiver for son who had a brain injury in 2000 and presented information to the council concerning education family members and the public about the recovery process and systems.

Future Council Activities

1. Work with the Texas Legislature to:
 - a. Add Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy to the State Medicaid Plan.
 - b. Require Texas Workforce Commission, in collaboration with the Office of Acquired Brain Injury and the Texas Brain Injury Advisory Council, to develop a Vocational Rehabilitation plan for individuals with Acquired Brain Injury across all levels of functioning.
 - c. Require the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), in collaboration with TBIAC and the HHSC Office of Acquired Brain Injury, to submit to the legislature by November 2022 a comprehensive plan to improve long term outcomes, reduce disability, and decrease long term healthcare costs for Texans with acquired brain injuries.
 - d. Connect with the Department of Public Safety to discuss brain injury and other illnesses.
 - e. Add non-traumatic brain injuries to the EMS and Trauma Registries maintained by the Department of State Health Services.
 - f. Evaluate other states' brain injury programs for best practices, including public education for individuals with Acquired Brain Injury.
 - g. Adequately fund CRS and OABI.

2. Develop legislative briefs and other educational fact sheets as required.
3. Continue partnering with EMS and Trauma Registries and CON-TEX Registry to receive database reports and obtain accurate data to identify occurrence of brain injury in Texas.
4. Continue to build and extend partnerships with state brain injury groups, agencies, departments, and providers.
5. HHSC TBIAC rule (§351.825) amended July 1, 2020, 45 TexReg 3617 and in effect until July 1, 2024.
6. Work with HHSC to:
 - a. Continue valuable collaboration between the TBIAC, OABI, and HHSC staff. Suggestions for collaboration on current and future projects, brain injury fact sheets, brain injury conferences, promoting Brain Injury Awareness Month, and brain injury training for first responders and law enforcement personnel.
 - b. Involve the Council in TBIAC membership recruitment, development and recommendations for appointment by the Executive Commissioner, including transparency by OABI and HHSC in the member selection.
 - c. Develop a plan to address the long term needs of Texans with brain injury.
 - d. Utilize updated data collection methods regarding the identification of Texans with ABI to obtain more current statistics.

Council Associated Cost

Council members serve on a volunteer basis and receive no reimbursement for their time. Previously, Council members were not reimbursed for travel expenses to attend meetings. The 86th Legislature added the TBIAC to the General Appropriations Act effective September 1, 2019. TBIAC members serving as a person with a brain injury or a family member actively involved in the care of loved one who sustained a brain injury are now eligible to receive travel reimbursement within the terms set forth in the General Appropriations Act.

Quarterly meetings are held virtually due to COVID-19 precautions to ensure the health and safety of members and staff. State employees provide support services

to the Council and may also attend the Council meetings.

According to HHSC, the fiscal year 2021 total cost estimate is \$70,000. The cost estimate includes 250 hours of executive, administration, and program staff providing support and \$0 for travel reimbursement of specific TBIAC members as allowable by law.

Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
ABI	Acquired Brain Injury
CRS	Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services
DSHS	Department of State Health Services
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission
IDD SRAC	Intellectual Developmental Disabilities System Redesign Advisory Committee
OABI	Office of Acquired Brain Injury
PPW	Pilot Program Workgroup
RIS	Rehabilitative & Independence Services
TBIAC	Texas Brain Injury Advisory Council