



**The Texas Brain Injury Advisory  
Council FY 22 Report to the Health  
and Human Services Commission  
Executive Commissioner**

**Sep 1, 2021, to Aug 31, 2022**

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**As Required by TAC**

**§351.825(d)(1)**

**Texas Brain Injury**

**Advisory Council**

**September 2022**

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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 78<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature established the Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council in 2003. In 2015, the 84<sup>th</sup> 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 (ABI). 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	10/18/2021	01/24/2022	04/18/2022	07/18/2022
Whitney Bailey	Lived Experience	N	N	N	N
Heather Cook	Family Member	Y	Y	Y	Y
Patti Foster	Lived Experience	Y	Y	Y	Y
Donna Kunz	Lived Experience	Y	Y	Y	Y
James Moody	Healthcare Practitioner	N	N	N	N
Austin Morgan	Lived Experience 18-26	N	N	Y	Y
Benjamin Nguyen	Lived Experience	Y	Y	Y	Y
Maritza Padilla	Post-Acute Care	Y	Y	Y	N
Jennifer Patterson	Family Member	Y	N	Y	N
Rachita Sharma	Higher Education	N/A	N/A	Y	Y
Mikael Simpson	Stroke Stakeholder	N	N/A	N/A	N/A
Johnny Taylor	Stroke Stakeholder	N/A	N/A	Y	N
John Thottakara	Acute Hospital	Y	Y	Y	Y
Donna Tiemeyer	Long-Term Care	Y	Y	Y	N/A
George Wolf	Higher Education	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vacant	Family Member				
Vacant	Family Member				

## 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 Services (CRS) program.
- Research Peer to Peer Programs in order to develop a Peer to Peer Program for brain injury survivors of Texas.
- Research a project to improve internet connectivity for brain injured Texans throughout the state, including hard-to-reach rural areas and those financially challenged.
- Recommend Office of Acquired Brain Injury (OABI), send out a monthly e-mail blast or some other platform, that regards brain injury current events and educational materials.
- Recommend OABI to increase utilization of social media platforms to improve public awareness of OABI and to promote educational and awareness materials across Texas.
- Recommend OABI develop education, awareness, and prevention materials that are focused on educating children and parents about the unique needs of children with a brain injury.
- Improve de-escalation training for officers by providing brain injury training for first responders.
- Proposed a position statement that the universal helmet law in Texas be reenacted to reduce the impact of brain injuries on the healthcare system.
- 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.

## **2022 TBIAC Accomplishments, Sep 1, 2021 to Aug 31, 2022:**

- 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.
- Developed position statement on universal helmet use for motorcyclists.
- Revised and updated the TBIAC bylaws in 2021 to address the manner in which the chair addresses member attendance concerns.
- 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 2022 TBIAC Committees:**

The TBIAC has three committees: Legislative and Policy Committee, Education Awareness 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, and Dr. Rachita Sharma.*

**The Education Awareness 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, Donna Kunz, Maritza Padilla, Austin Morgan, Johnny Taylor 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. Rachita Sharma. Current committee members are Whitney Bailey, Donna Kunz, James Moody, and Jennifer Patterson.*

**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.
  - To help children in Texas who have suffered a brain injury and to equip parents and care-partners with positive coping strategies, Patti released the illustrated children's book, *The Adventures of Head Trauma Hero* 2022, by Redemption Press.
  
2. The 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:
  - Dr. Deana H. Adams, Founder & President of Hope After Brain Injury - presented hope and help for brain injury survivors, care-partners, and healthcare staff in Texas, in order to educate, equip, and encourage their navigating strategies. <https://www.HopeAfterBrainInjury.org>
  - Jill Ferrington and Seija Curton, with National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) – informed and explained insight and details regarding Peer Support Programs
  - Audra Rabroker, Coordinator of Care at University of Texas at Southwestern – provided an overview of care for stroke patients and families, peer



mentoring, and strategies for choosing topics that best meet needs of patients and families.

- Audrey Self, TBI Mentor Administrator for the Peer Support Programs at Baylor Scott & White, Dallas – Gave an informative overview addressing their Peer Mentor Program, the weekly TBI support group, and weekly education sessions.

## Future Council Activities

1. Work with the Texas Legislature to:
  - a. Add Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy to the State Medicaid Plan.
  - b. The council will work with Texas Workforce Commission, in collaboration with the Office of Acquired Brain Injury and the Texas Brain Injury Advisory Council, to enhance a comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation plan for individuals with ABI across all levels of functioning.
  - c. Submit the legislative report to the legislature by December 1, 2022 in accordance with 1TAC Part 15, §351.825(d)(2).
  - 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 ABI.
  - 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 extended the abolition date through 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 recruitment and development of council members 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. The Database Review Committee will utilize updated data collection methods regarding the identification of Texans with ABI to obtain more current statistics.
7. Request that Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services (CRS) Program service coverage includes not only Traumatic Brain Injury, but also Non-Traumatic Brain Injury, which is often referred to as an Acquired Brain Injury. An Acquired Brain Injury may be either traumatic or non-traumatic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines a Traumatic Brain Injury as “a disruption in the normal function of the brain that can be caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating injury.” A Non-Traumatic Brain Injury, also known as Acquired Brain Injury, may include a brain tumor, ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke, brain infection, or anoxic brain injury. Eligibility for CRS is defined by Texas Administrative Code Title 26 Part 1 Chapter §352.7.
8. Develop an insurance mandate that requires health insurers to meet the acute and long-term healthcare needs of individuals with brain injury.
9. Develop an outreach model for case managers, social workers, and other healthcare professionals, serving rural areas and underserved communities of the Rio Grande Valley, South Texas community, East and West Texas regions, as well as the Panhandle, to include educational materials, online resources, and accessibility of these resources that enable positive coping strategies and facilitate healthy, independent living on a long-term basis.
10. Continue to explore more opportunities to limit morbidity and mortality through preventative measures. The council is currently exploring opportunities for fall prevention which is the leading cause of TBI in those ages 65 and older.
11. The TBIAC is working with HHSC to research options for building a network of brain injury focused social media sites that are user-friendly and easily accessible to the general public, along with brain injury resources and contacts to promote education and prevention through the OABI website.

## 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 86<sup>th</sup> 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 2022 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

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
ABI	Acquired Brain Injury
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
CRS	Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services
DSHS	Department of State Health Services
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission
OABI	Office of Acquired Brain Injury
TBIAC	Texas Brain Injury Advisory Council