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News Release

New program helping traumatic brain injury survivors

OLYMPIA -- Traumatic brain injury survivors now have a new statewide service to help them find services and support during their TBI recovery. Washington's Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council is sponsoring a resource coordination pilot project to help residents find local services after they are released from the hospital or rehabilitation center.

"Survivors often face many challenges and struggles. Optimal recovery from brain injury requires networking with other people who have had similar experiences, as well as learning what resources are available to meet the needs of TBI survivors," said Dr. Robert Djergaian of Clark County. The doctor has been working with TBI survivors since 1982. "The goal of the pilot project is to improve the quality of life for people with TBI and their families.

The resource coordinators are trained professionals able to assess the needs of TBI survivors, develop a care plan and advocate for clients at no cost to eligible participants. The goal of the pilot project is to improve the quality of life for persons with TBI and their family members.

Spokane coordinator Cory Allan said, "We are trying to close the gaps and remove barriers to services for people and their families in Eastern Washington who have experienced a TBI."

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Pierce County coordinator Janelle Ryan said: "The resources are out there for survivors of TBI, but people don't always know where to find them. That is where we can step in. Not only can we point people in the right direction in terms of getting the services they need but we can also help them establish realistic goals. I would encourage anyone struggling with the aftermath of TBI to call the Helpline (1-877-TBI-1766). They can help determine if someone is eligible for the project and, for those who don't meet the criteria; the Helpline counselors can provide guidance."

The pilot project is funded through the Washington State TBI fund that was established by the state Legislature in 2007. The project is funded by collecting \$2 from all moving-vehicle violations in the state. In addition to the resource coordination pilot, the fund supports a statewide helpline 1-877-TBI-1766, Web site www.TBIWashington.org , support groups for TBI survivors, and a governor-appointed advisory council. The council advises the Department of Social and Health Services on planning and implementing TBI services for survivors and caregivers.

Partners in this project include the Washington Adult Day Services Association, Brian Injury Association of Washington, Brain Injury Alliance Northwest, and the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

The resource coordination project is looking for TBI survivors who were injured within the last 24 months. The coordinators are trained to evaluate and advocate for local services to help TBI survivors and their caregivers within their local community. The project has coordinators in four counties -- Spokane, Pierce, Clark, and King. The pilot project runs through June of this year to provide limited case management assistance.

To find out more information contact the statewide toll free TBI helpline at 1-877-TBI-1766 or 1-877-824-1766.

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