

## Legislative Report SFY 2017 (7/1/16 to 6/30/17)

Every day in Utah, 60 people are treated in an emergency department for a traumatic brain injury (TBI), seven people are hospitalized, and at least one person dies from a TBI. The age-adjusted rate of TBI hospitalizations was 10.2 per 10,000 in 2014 (**Figure 1**). TBIs resulted in nearly \$118 million in hospitalization charges in 2014; a 24.2% increase from \$95 million in 2013. This does not include costs for disability and long-term care, nor lost wages.

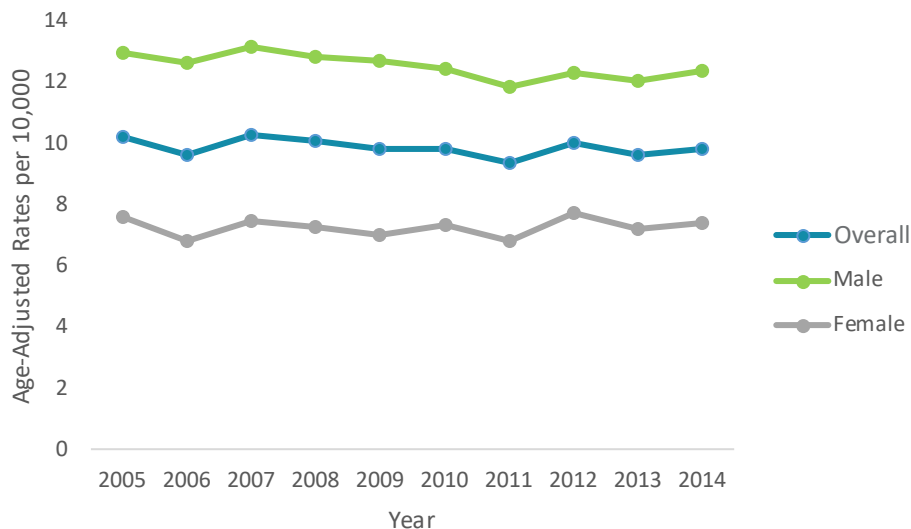
The TBI Fund is used for:

- resource facilitation services\*;
- neuro-psychological evaluation;
- magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brain with a report;
- education of professionals and the public regarding understanding, treatment, and prevention of TBI; and
- support of an information and referral system for persons with a TBI and their families.

For every \$1 spent of the TBI Fund, clients obtained \$1.49 in needed services. To qualify for the TBI Fund, a person must have a diagnosed TBI, be a resident of Utah, and have exhausted other financial options (e.g., insurance benefits).

The TBI Fund cannot be used for medical treatment or rehabilitation care.

**Figure 1: TBI Hospitalization Rates by Sex, Utah, 2005-2014**



### Paul's Story

Paul sustained a moderate TBI on September 30, 1994 when he was hit by a car while riding a bike. With the help of the TBI Fund, Paul received resource facilitation and the needed assistance to complete paperwork to keep his Section 8 voucher as well as get a live-in aide. Paul also needed assistance to advocate for services offered by various agencies. Paul is grateful for the assistance received through the TBI Fund.

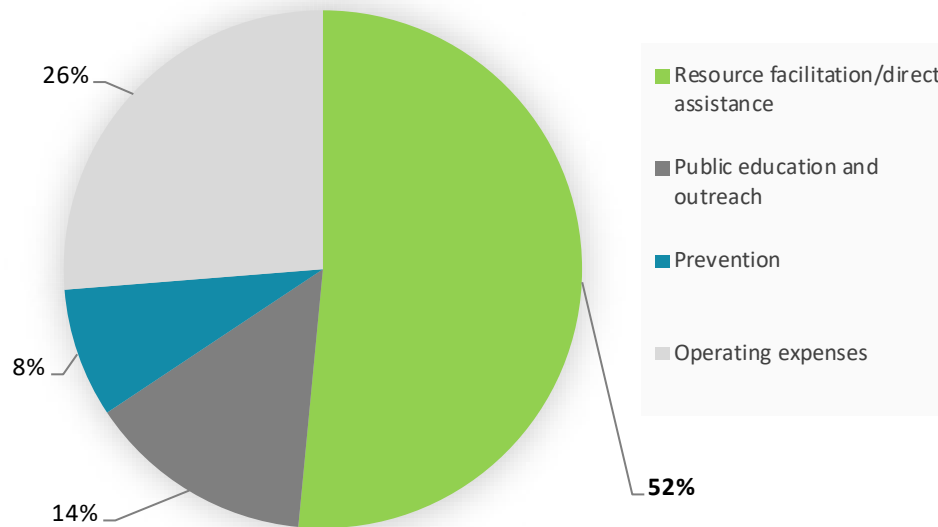
\*Resource facilitation is a process that helps individuals and families by providing short-term support with problem solving and linking people in need with available and appropriate resources to assist with successful return to school, work, or community reintegration.

**TBI Fund Accomplishments**

- 292 clients received intake assessments with 129 qualifying for TBI resource facilitation services.
- 129 clients with a TBI received one-to-one resource facilitation services at an average cost to the TBI fund of \$497 per person. The contracting agencies provided in-kind funds, so the actual monetary value of the services was higher.
- 28 people received a neuro-psych evaluation to clarify the needed services that would be most beneficial.
- 75 of the 129 participants who received resource facilitation services were in need of and have been connected to ongoing services.
- 36 additional people received an intake interview but did not qualify for services from the TBI Fund, because they did not have a 'traumatic' brain injury but an 'acquired' brain injury (e.g., as a result of West Nile virus, encephalitis, anoxia, etc.).
- MRI services were provided at low-cost to five clients by U.S. MRI in Salt Lake City. These clients were referred for the MRIs after a neuro-psych exam.
- TBI Fund services were expanded across the state to reach more rural areas.

In SFY17, the TBI Fund expended the \$224,000 in legislative appropriation. Below is a chart of expenditures by category. An additional \$20,000 of in-kind services were contributed, that are not reflected in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Breakdown of SFY 2017 TBI Fund Expenditures**



**Faun's Story**

Faun sustained a mild TBI due to a car crash in March 1990. Since then, Faun has struggled with organizational skills. Faun received resource facilitation with the help of the TBI Fund, which helped her with learning the skills she needed to organize her home. She was also able to get connected to additional supports in her community to help her continue with her recovery. Faun said, "It was a great help for me to have a trained resource facilitator teach me the skills I needed to organize my home. I've gotten order where I didn't have order before for many years and I feel uplifted because I'm not so stressed from losing things or not knowing where to start. One of my biggest deficits is not being able to start projects. With the education I received from the TBI Fund, I have been able to get motivated, stay on track, and finish a project. Thank you very much to the TBI Fund that provided me with the resource facilitation services I needed. I hope this fund continues so that people living with traumatic brain injuries can become more productive citizens and have happier lives."

### Ryan's Story

Ryan sustained a severe TBI on March 27, 2014, after a train hit his car. Ryan needed a great deal of assistance so he could live independently in the community. The TBI Fund resource facilitator was able to connect him with needed services by helping him fill out complicated applications and following through with items needed for the applications. As a result, Ryan received Medicaid, food stamps, utility assistance, and public transit assistance. He was also connected with community resources to help him find an apartment and furniture.

### Contractors Challenges

- Resources for TBI survivors are limited outside of the Wasatch Front and need to be widely publicized. Funding is needed to cover outreach costs.
- TBI survivors are overwhelmed with needs and underserved with resources.
- Insurance and Medicaid barriers include limited benefits, high co-pays, lack of available insurance and affordable healthcare, and providers who are not willing to serve individuals with a TBI due to low reimbursement levels from Medicaid.
- The risk of suicide increases among TBI survivors due to isolation and lack of support, combined with impulsivity as a result of their brain injury.
- TBI survivors and their families have a reluctance to ask for help due to a fear of being told "no again."
- There is little or no awareness about TBI and the TBI Fund. This is especially true among individuals suffering from or seeking help for domestic violence.
- There continues to be a great need for similar services for acquired brain injured individuals who cannot be served by the TBI Fund.
- Due to the memory loss caused by a TBI, clients need continued follow-up to ensure they do not "get lost in the system."
- Documentation of one's TBI can be difficult to obtain and can take a long time to acquire, if at all.
- Services are sometimes not available to individuals due to financial constraints, lack of availability, severity of crisis, and age restrictions.

### Public Education and Outreach

- Contractors increased outreach by putting information about the TBI Fund on their websites and social media channels and distribute flyers in their communities.
- Facebook ads promoting the TBI Fund ran throughout the year. These advertisements used pictures of actual TBI Fund clients.
- Television segments aired on Good 4 Utah and KUTV.
- A KSL Brandview was published which included a quiz called, "Do you know how to avoid a traumatic brain injury?" to gauge the readers' knowledge and understanding of TBIs and the TBI Fund.



### Stepping On

Building Confidence and Reducing Falls

Older adult falls are the leading cause of TBI hospitalizations and deaths in Utah. As a result, the TBI Fund Advisory Committee continued to allocate funding for prevention of older adult falls by contracting with five local agencies to implement the evidence-based Stepping On program. Stepping On is a 7-week program that teaches older adults how to reduce their risk of falling and simple exercises that can increase their strength and balance. The program was implemented in Tooele, Salt Lake, Utah, and Wasatch counties and the Five County area in southwestern Utah (which include Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, and Washington counties). A total of 15 Stepping On workshops were held, reaching 191 individuals. Outcomes from the Stepping On program indicated older adults reduced their fear of falling, increased their activity, and were more comfortable talking with their healthcare provider about falls (98%).

### Edward's Story

Edward sustained a brain injury at a very young age. The TBI Fund resource facilitator was able to support his wife through some difficult times, letting her know that many of the things she was having issues with were very common with a person that has a brain injury. Edward also received a neuro-psychological evaluation which determined which parts of his brain were impacted. This allowed him and his wife to see where his barriers were and allowed them to seek proper treatment. His wife says, "The TBI Fund saved my marriage, with the education and testing it provided, I am better able to support and understand my husband".

### Professional Training

- A total of 68 training events were held during SFY17 by the TBI Fund contractors, reaching approximately 6,300 individuals.
- Phoenix Services provided one Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) trainings for five professionals.

### TBI Fund Overview

The TBI Fund was established in 2008 by the Utah Legislature as a restricted special revenue to:

- Educate the general public and professionals on treatment and prevention of TBI.
- Provide access to evaluations and coordinate short-term care to assist an individual in identifying services or support needs, resources, and benefits for which the individual may be eligible.
- Develop and support an information referral system for persons with a TBI and their families.

The TBI Fund is administered under the direction of the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) through the Violence and Injury Prevention Program (VIPP). The TBI Fund received ongoing appropriation of \$200,000 per year in the 2015 Legislative Session.

### TBI Fund Advisory Committee

TBI Fund Advisory Committee members must be appointed annually by the UDOH Executive Director and represent individuals who are familiar with TBI, its causes, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and support services, including individuals who have sustained a TBI and family representatives.

### Robyn's Story

Robyne sustained her first moderate-severe TBI in December 1987 and a second TBI in October 2002, both due to a fall. She received resource facilitation with the help of the TBI Fund and set her up with an advocacy class where she has learned to better advocate for herself and she is also making friends and getting some peer support. Robyne was also able to get a neuro-psychological evaluation scheduled through her insurance. Robyne says, "I believe the TBI Fund resource facilitation changed my life, because of my anxiety and culture, so I understand better. I attend classes (at the Utah Independent Living Center). I have learned advocacy for disabilities which has allowed me the knowledge and confidence to express (myself)... My life has been enhanced from being able to adjust to social situations. I have learned skills to live a life that has a purpose and meaning."