

Testimony on behalf of the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut

Presented before the Connecticut State Legislature Appropriations Committee
March 4, 2011

My name is Adam Perrin and I am a primary care sports medicine physician employed by Middlesex Hospital. My primary interest within my sports medicine practice is the care and management of mild traumatic brain injury, more commonly referred to as concussion. Upon becoming a member of the Connecticut Concussion Task Force in 2008 I learned of the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut and their good works through fellow Task Force member Carrie Kramer. (Carrie presently serves as the BIAC Director of Brain Injury Services.) I quickly realized how absolutely essential the BIAC was to the Task Force's primary mission of educating the public as well as health care professionals. For this purpose the BIAC remains our most vital resource.

The BIAC serves the essential role of comprehensive support and guidance to the brain injury survivor, their caregivers and their health care providers. Through BIAC services the brain injury survivor and caregivers are much better able to negotiate the often complex and overwhelming challenges they face. For my purposes the BIAC has been a goldmine of patient education literature which is always readily available, plentiful and highly informative. They also serve to provide me with cutting edge medical education through their consistently excellent conferences such as their Annual Symposium (to be held one week from today). As is always the case, exceptional service provision and maintenance comes at considerable cost and the BIAC has depended on state government contracts since 1984 to fund the core of its operating budget.

I was very distressed to learn that the Governor's Budget calls for the total elimination of the BIAC's operating grant, currently received through the Department of Social Services under the line item "Services for Persons with Disabilities". Such an act would not only be a huge and potentially harmful disservice to the brain injury survivor, but it would result in the transfer of the

survivor services burden to an already overwhelmed and, daresay, inadequately prepared state system. This action would ultimately cost the state far more than the relatively small grant the BIAC receives from the DSS. It must be stressed that the BIAC has willingly continued to maintain its provision of comprehensive services despite dwindling resources and increases in need. The BIAC in fact saves the state money through their advocacy and educational services which serves to greatly reduce hospitalization/institutionalization or even incarceration of the brain-injury survivor.

The need for the BIAC's services is needed now more than ever in light of the significant increase in attention being placed on concussion and its proper management. It is curious to me that for a Legislature who found it important enough to create and pass a concussion law (SB 456, "An Act Concerning Student Athletes and Concussion"), and which passed, mind you, with overwhelming bipartisan support from both the House and Senate, would on the other hand opt to virtually eliminate the very organization that helps those who sustain concussions, their caregivers, and the professionals who treat them. This just does not make good sense! It is contradictory and would be counterproductive. There is no other body in the state that does what the BIAC does. Please do the right thing and not allow the elimination of the operations grant to vitally needed by the BIAC.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express my views.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam E. Perrin, MD