

### **DAIL Response to Senate Health & Welfare Committee**

For context, the Vermont Brain Injury Program provides rehabilitative services to Vermonters 16 years of age or older with a documented brain injury, who meet specific program eligibility criteria and are Medicaid eligible. Program participation represents only a small portion of the actual population of Vermonters with brain injury. Please note, through its recent work with the ACL Traumatic Brain Injury State Partnership grant, Vermont has begun using the term “Brain Injury” versus “Traumatic Brain Injury”, allowing for a more comprehensive approach to brain injury.

### **Here is what we know about the Vermont Brain Injury Program:**

Utilization of the state’s Brain Injury Program has decreased from serving up to 86 individuals in November 2017 to a low of 77 in June 2019. Utilization has decreased primarily due to shifting individuals who were enrolled in the long- term brain injury program shared living to the Choices for Care (CFC), Adult Family Care (shared living arrangement). This shift had no impact on the individual’s services, it merely shifted the funding to eliminate a budget pressure for the brain injury program. After this shift occurred, Brain Injury Program enrollment has slowly started to increase as of June 2020. **Currently, about 15-20% of individuals enrolled in CFC have an acquired brain injury**

### **VT Brain Injury Program Demographics:**

81% Male

19% Female

Average Age = 47 years

**VT Brain Injury Program - Causes of Brain Injury (N=79):** Note: 46 of the 79 participants did not have original records in the electronic database, therefore, their cause of brain injury was not specified. Of the remaining 33 participants with cause identified:

Motor Vehicle Accident = 7 (21%)

Aneurysm/Hemorrhagic Stroke = 5 (15%)

Gun Shot Wound to head/face = 3 (9%)

Assault = 3 (9%)

Seizures or Drug OD causing Hypoxia= 3 (9%)

Fall = 2 (6%)

Domestic Abuse = 2 (6%)

Hit by motor vehicle = 2 (6%)

ATV Accident = 1 (3%)

Motorcycle Accident= 1 (3%)

Occluded Stroke/CVA = 1 (3%)

Childhood Trauma/Abuse = 1 (3%)

Brain Infection = 1 (3%)

Ski Accident = 1 (3%)

### **VT Brain Injury Program General Data:**

**Since 2008** (this is the year the Brain Injury program started using the Welsky/SAMS database):

- 37 individuals have “Graduated” from the Brain Injury program.
- 29 or 78% of the 37 Graduates, re-enrolled in the Brain Injury program, with the range of years before re-enrollment, being 2-10 years.

- Average length of enrollment in the “rehab” portion of the program is 3.5 years.
- Since 2008, a total of 345 individuals have been enrolled in the Brain Injury program.

**June 30, 2016 – September 1, 2020**

- 14 individuals transitioned from the Brain Injury Program to Choices for Care.
- 16 individuals have “Graduated” from the Brain Injury Program.
- 6 individuals have died with the average age of the deceased being 59 years

Though Vermont does not have comprehensive population level brain injury data, here is what we do know:

- The **2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)** reports that 1 in 5 youth experienced symptoms of a concussion (Traumatic Brain Injury) from playing a sport or being physically active. This is 20%.  
[https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/CHS\\_YRBS\\_statewide\\_report.pdf](https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/CHS_YRBS_statewide_report.pdf)
- In **2020 the TBI State Partnership grant funds** paid to have two brain injury questions added to the **Adult Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS)**. We have not received the results of this yet, but it will help with establishing prevalence.
- The Health Department issued a **Traumatic Brain Injury report using 2010 -2014 VT vital statistics and hospital discharge data:**  
[https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HSVR\\_Injury\\_TBI.pdf](https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HSVR_Injury_TBI.pdf)
  - This report only includes individuals who sought medical attention and were diagnosed with a brain injury. We think there are a lot of people who do not seek medical attention, unless an incident also caused apparent physical injury. We also know from many brain injury survivors that their brain injury (even when moderate to severe) is not getting a formal diagnosis by health care providers.

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**Up-to-date information about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found at:**

<https://dail.vermont.gov/novel-coronavirus-information>

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>