

BIAA Publishes the 2026 State of Brain Injury Report



WHAT IS A BRAIN INJURY?

Acquired brain injuries affect millions of Americans across all ages. Brain injuries can be categorized as traumatic and non-traumatic.

ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY (ABI)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Caused by an **external force** to the head or neck (a blow, jolt, or penetrating injury that disrupts normal brain function)

Leading causes: Falls (especially among children and older adults), motor vehicle accidents, firearm-related injuries, assaults, sports, and blast exposures (e.g., from explosives detonated in combat or military training environments)

Non-traumatic Brain Injury

Caused by an **internal event** inside the brain (such as a stroke or brain tumor)

Leading causes: Stroke (blocked or ruptured blood vessels), anoxic/hypoxic injury (oxygen deprivation), brain infections (meningitis), brain tumors (glioblastoma), toxic exposure

AMERICANS AFFECTED ANNUALLY BY TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

2.8 MILLION
ANNUAL TBI INCIDENCE

1 IN 5
RECURRENT INJURIES
AMONG ADULTS OCCUR
WITHIN THE FIRST YEAR

11.4 MILLION
ADULTS LIVE WITH
TBI-RELATED DISABILITY

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive look at the current state of brain injury in America, the Brain Injury Association of America has published The 2026 State of Brain Injury Report.

A collaboration from distinguished leaders in the field of brain injury and neurorehabilitation, The State of Brain Injury explores the impact that acquired brain injury has on millions of Americans.

[Download the 2026 State of Brain Injury Report](#)

HOME Project Updates

Public Comment Updates

In early 2026, Iowa HHS held a [public comment period](#) as part of the HOME Project. The goal is to make services easier to access and help people stay in their homes and communities.

During this time, **176 comments** were submitted about the proposed waiver changes. Feedback came from providers, current and former waiver members, family members, and others.

Most comments included questions, concerns about possible gaps or risks, and support for the proposed changes. Some feedback shared personal perspectives that were helpful for understanding individual experiences, but not all comments applied to the broader waiver system or the proposal overall.

What are the proposed changes?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approves programs called HCBS waivers, which help people get care at home or in their community instead of in a facility.

As part of the HOME project, Iowa HHS plans to simplify its current system. It would replace four existing waivers (Health and Disability, Children's Mental Health, AIDS/HIV, and Physical Disability) with two new ones based on age.

The two proposed waivers are:

Iowa HHS needs your input! You are invited to take the **Family Health Survey** to share your experiences in getting health care and social support services. Your feedback will help HHS improve the health of women and children in Iowa.

1. Children and Youth Waiver (ages 0–21):
Provides services for children and young people with disabilities, special health care needs, or mental health needs. This program helps children live at home with their families instead of in places like hospitals or nursing facilities.

No personal information will be taken during the survey.

The survey will close on **Wednesday, May 20, 2026.**

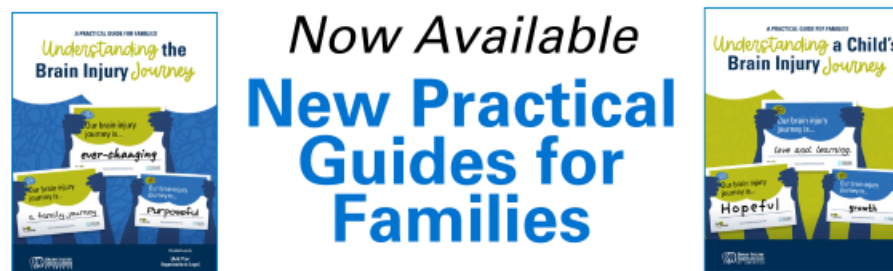
2. Adults with Disabilities Waiver (ages 21+):

Provides services for adults with disabilities. This program helps adults live in their community instead of in a nursing facility.

[Take the Survey](#)

[Versión en Español](#)

Since the public comment period concluded, what changes to the



Updated Waivers and Participant Needs Assessment

(WPNA) language to be consistent across the **Children and Youth (CY) Waiver** and the **Adults with Disabilities Waiver**.

• Corrected **Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)** service and removed the self-direction option.

- Amended **Respite** services to allow them to be provided by individuals who are a

[Download the Practical Guide for free](#)

These guides are designed to help caregivers better understand what to expect following a loved one's brain injury and how to move forward. The guides include information about:

- What happens to the brain after injury
- What to expect during hospital care and rehabilitation
- How to prepare for the transition home
- Tips for managing symptoms and supporting recovery
- Returning to school, work, and everyday life
- Navigating financial and legal challenges

The guides also include tips and advice from brain injury survivors and caregivers from the BIAA community, as well as checklists, templates, and other practical materials to help caregivers in their journeys.

A New Tool for Navigating Concussions!

Whether you are a parent, healthcare professional, school nurse, educator, or coach, **Concussion Navigator** is designed to help you feel more prepared and access clear, reliable concussion information when you need it most.

Explore the resource and share it with families who may need guidance.

Concussion Navigator

Youth Leadership Academy



Applications are now being accepted for the 2026 Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) program. YLA is a great way to **connect with peers** with disabilities and **learn leadership skills**. Spend two hours per day for five days this summer and gain skills for a lifetime!

All sessions are virtual and FREE. **All applications are due by May 29.**

Learn more details about the Youth Leadership Academy

Webinars

FREE CEU opportunities available for the webinars!

Visit our [webinar page](#) to learn more and register.



**Validation as a Tool for
Connecting and Understanding**

Troy Ward, LMHC, Counselor and Owner
of Ward Counseling Services, LLC



WEBINAR
May 13, 2026
12:00 - 1:00 PM CST

www.biaia.org info@biaia.org 855-444-6443



RESILIENCE IN ACTION: TURNING SETBACKS INTO COMEBACKS

DANIELLE PARISE, BRAIN INJURY SURVIVOR

WEBINAR
June 5, 2026
12:00-1:00 PM CST



Our support groups are where individuals can connect, share experiences, and find encouragement. Together, we provide understanding, resources, and community to help one another navigate challenges and celebrate successes. Visit our [Support Group page](#) for more information.



Educational Topics Survey

What topics related to brain injury would you like to see in upcoming webinars hosted by the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa? Your feedback is valued and appreciated! [Participate in the survey.](#)



Call for Webinar Proposals

The Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa is looking for presenters to deliver webinars on topics related to brain injury treatment, rehabilitation, recovery, and support. Presentations can target professionals or survivors and their loved ones. [Submit proposal](#)

Brain Injury Resource Facilitation



Brain Injury Resource Facilitators are available to serve Iowans, to answer questions and connect those with a brain injury to resources and information.

[Learn more about this program.](#) BIAIA is one call away.



Our mission at the Brain Injury Association of Iowa is to create a better future through brain injury prevention, advocacy, education, research and support. Join us on our platforms to obtain the latest and most relevant information pertaining to brain injury.