

Traumatic and Acquired Brain Injury Legal Needs Assessment - Executive Summary

Text alternative for web accessibility infographic (link).

Alaska's TBI rate is **28% higher** than the national average (DBH, 2013).

To improve legal services for Alaskans with traumatic and acquired brain injury (TABI), the Disability Law Center (DLC) of Alaska contracted the Center for Human Development to conduct a statewide legal needs assessment.



Data was collected from people with TABI, family members, and stakeholders through key informant interviews, online survey, and focus group interviews.

Recommendations

The DLC should...

1. Educate people with TABI about DLC
2. Train TABI providers about DLC services and referral processes
3. Seek professional development about TABI and best practices
4. Review and enhance policies, procedures, and practices through the lens of someone with a TABI

The TABI System should...

1. Coordinate efforts across TABI systems and services for positive recovery
2. Examine employment, workplace, and unemployment concerns
3. Examine housing, homelessness, and precarious housing concerns
4. Educate public to increase understanding of TABI

Key Informant Interviews

Highlighted six key areas:

- Employment
- Housing
- Education
- Access to state, federal and veterans' benefits
- Benefit application assistance
- DLC services

Online Survey

Adults with TABI shared:

Most applied for benefits: Social Security (56.4%) and Medicaid (50.6%)



Highest denial rates: Social Security (47.7%) and Adult Public Assistance (41.4%)

On average accessed **only 1** service (e.g., behavioral health, physical therapy, or medication management)



Care coordinators assisted with benefit applications most often

More likely to receive Medicaid when care coordinators assisted with applications

68.0% had heard of the DLC, yet this did not translate to understanding DLC mission or seeking assistance



Focus Group Interviews

Revealed six major themes:

Complexity of TABI

"Each brain injury is different. Each will be different in how you respond or help that person."

Legal Rights in Relation to Systems

"[I] needed help and could still use guidance regarding Social Security rules so I can keep my medical benefits and go to work."

Systems & Services

"If someone could have helped me. I'm being denied the help I need, I don't know what the next step is."

DLC Mission

"It's really important to know what it is the [DLC] does and what they don't do."

Legal Rights & Needs

Adults with TABI felt they were "not educated on [their] legal rights and need help with that."

DLC Customization & Expansion

"Increase [the DLC's] visibility somehow, because I didn't know anything about them until I needed their services."