



ANNUAL REPORT FY2012



Brain & Spinal Injury
Trust Fund Commission

Bridging Gaps

OUR VISION is a Georgia where people with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries are valued, have equal opportunity and real choices.

Our mission is to enhance the lives of Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Guided by the aspirations of people with traumatic injuries, the Commission supports lives of meaning, independence, and inclusion. As the state's Lead Agency on Traumatic Injuries, we:

Administer the Central Registry to identify those who are injured,

Distribute resources through the Trust Fund, and

Advocate for improvements in statewide services.

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is Georgia's only state agency that offers dedicated funding and support for individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury. Created by Constitutional amendment, the Commission's mission is to distribute much needed resources to eligible Georgia residents.

The Commission does this through three major avenues: The Central Registry, the Trust Fund, and as Georgia's Lead Agency for Traumatic Injuries.

As the Lead Agency (p. 3), we are collaborating with stakeholders across the state to make sure that Georgia has a system of care that truly meets the needs of people with traumatic brain and spinal injuries. Through our State Action Plan we are collaborating with agencies, hospitals, schools, and service providers to improve comprehensive care. Our stewardship program helps those injured navigate the application process for receiving a Trust Fund award and connects them to services in their local community. Our legislative efforts have impacted laws that will reduce injury and give voice to those with traumatic injury at the Gold Dome.

The Central Registry (p. 6) identifies newly-injured individuals and their families and enables us to reach out to each one personally to educate them about and connect them to the resources they need to rebuild their lives. The registry allows us to efficiently gauge the needs across the state, the impact of our outreach, and the gaps we still need to address.

The Trust Fund (p. 7) is funded through a surcharge on DUI fines. It provides much needed monetary resources for those whose insurance benefits have depleted or who simply cannot afford necessary goods and services they need post-injury. Estimated lifetime costs of care for a person with a severe TBI can reach \$4,000,000. Care for an individual with a severe SCI can reach upwards of \$3,000,000. Alleviating even a small portion of financial burden or resource obstacles for those working to define a new way of life and strive for rehabilitation can cause a ripple effect across their entire lives and open the door to greater independence.

In these strained economic times, services and resources for individuals with traumatic injuries are proving to be more expensive and harder to find. Hence, the role of the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has become more valuable than ever before. We are focused every day on bridging the gaps across our state – in service collaboration, community outreach, education, and resource development. For so many across our state the Commission has proven to be the vital bridge between simply surviving and thriving.

Bridging the Gaps Across Our State.

Bridging Gaps via The Lead Agency

Dear Friends:

For nearly six years I have been privileged to serve as Executive Director of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission. When I first began my duties I was struck by the lack of dialogue and collaboration between entities that provide services to individuals with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Though many choices for acute or post-acute care exist, we have yet to develop a seamless continuum of care. The Commission remains strategically focused on being actively engaged on local, state and national levels to bridge the gaps and help build the comprehensive continuum of care needed.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has created the Administration for Community Living, which will now house the Offices of Aging, Developmental Disabilities and Disability. This creates promising new organization and infrastructure to better support individuals with physical disabilities. Meanwhile, at the state level, the Division of Aging Services has been tasked with providing new products and services for individuals with disabilities. Exciting new collaborative education efforts are in motion between the Commission and other Georgia agencies such as ADRC Gateway counselors that are helping train service providers across the state how to best support individuals with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries in their local communities.

During FY2012 the Commission and staff have been focused intently on bridging the gaps on behalf of our stakeholders by:

- Reaching out to more than 125,000 stakeholders to inform them about the Commission and our grant-making program
- Establishing relationships with new healthcare and social service partners that can share information about the Commission to Georgians affected by traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries
- Convening town hall meetings to answer questions about the dangers of brain and spinal cord injury and how they can impact individuals and their families
- Equipping hospital discharge staff with our award application information for patients
- Educating the ICWP and MFP waivers about the unique needs of Georgians that have sustained a traumatic brain and spinal cord injury
- Funding Information and Referral Specialists to support the 70,000 Georgians impacted by traumatic brain injury each year
- Expanding media relations to strengthen our voice and awareness of the Commission's work
- Forging new community outreach partnerships to increase community education about injury prevention and rehabilitation
- Funding annual brain injury camp scholarships for Georgia nonprofits.

As we press on, the Commission will continue to search for new partners and new gaps to bridge until a complete continuum of care has been realized in Georgia. Help us. Call us toll free at 1-888-233-5760 with your suggestions. We would love to hear from you.

Best regards,



Craig Young
BSITFC Executive Director

STATE ACTION PLAN

The Commission's State Action Plan is a 10-year strategic plan to address the unmet needs of Georgia residents with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Implementation of the State Action Plan began in 2008 to enhance efforts in the following areas:

- Screening and Identification
- Training and Awareness
- Rehabilitation and Wellness
- Service Coordination
- Long Term and Life-Long Supports
- Independent and Integrated Living
- Community Participation

In 2012, State Action Plan goals and activities were achieved with support from more than 125 representatives of advocacy organizations and service providers across the state who serve as members of oversight committees and task forces. Through a process of ongoing planning and assessment, the State Action Plan provides a mechanism for determining:

- 1) The extent to which the statewide service structure is meeting the needs of persons with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries; AND/OR
- 2) The extent to which adjustments in the service structure will better facilitate care and support to provide maximum independence for individuals.

FY2012 State Action Plan activities produced several achievements, including:

- Ongoing coordination of services to provide maximum care for individuals with neurobehavioral symptoms in the absence of a centralized system for such care.
- Establishment of a statewide education and prevention network stemming from the development of committees and coalitions to raise awareness and inform about policies for providers, schools and community-level programs.
- Development and sharing of training tools for families, service coordinators, teachers, transition coordinators, and/or rehabilitation counselors who assist children with transitions back to school, family, and community post-injury.
- Wide reaching broadcasts through the use of public service announcements that featured critical information about injury prevention and awareness for persons with TBI/SCI and their families.
- Dissemination of resources through town hall meetings designed to attract parents, youth athletes, school personnel, local stakeholders and healthcare providers to discuss local solutions to rising rates of injury.

As the Lead Agency for Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries in the state of Georgia, the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission, through its State Action Plan, is committed to finding solutions that will ultimately "bridge the gap" for Georgians with traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury for years to come.

Visit the State Action Plan section of our website at www.gatrufund.org for more information.



PUBLIC POLICY

From pre-school soccer to high school cheerleading to the National Football League, sports concussions are numerous and can be serious. Representative Billy Mitchell introduced the Georgia Return to Play Act of 2012 to help protect the state's active youth from long-lasting effects of head injuries. Representative Sharon Cooper, chair of the Health and Human Services Committee, signed on as a co-sponsor. Current and former professional athletes; neuroscientists; coaches and others testified in support of House Bill 673 during the 2012 legislative session.

Several current and past players for the Atlanta Falcons testified in support of the legislation. Falcon's kicker, Matt Bryant, was quoted by the Atlanta Journal Constitution saying, "The most important thing in all of this, anything that you can do to improve the safety for the kids, to me, you find a way." Although the bill did not pass, the discussion about how to best protect Georgia's young athletes has begun and is moving in a positive direction.

Also in the 2011 legislative session, Georgia's vocational rehabilitation services became a stand-alone agency, and the passage of House Bill 1110 increased the penalties for operating an unlicensed personal care home.

Embracing Life



You only have to spend a few minutes around Lindsey Bush to have a mouthful of adjectives to describe her – fun, outgoing, spunky, go-getter – but the one that resonates most is joy-filled. Her smile says it all. She is truly grateful to be alive.

On August 8, 2001 Lindsey bounded through a typical day at Newnan High School where she was an honor roll student, varsity cheerleader, varsity soccer player and active club member. She had stayed after school to help a teacher move to a new classroom. When the time came to leave for cheerleading practice she left with a big smile on her face, but within minutes her world, as she knew it, would change forever.

Lindsey climbed in the car with a friend, buckled up, and began to share the news of the day. At the intersection of Hal Jones Road and US 29 in Coweta County, their car collided with a Ford F150 and all went dark. Responders had to use the Jaws of Life to cut Lindsey out and Life-Flight her to Atlanta Medical Center. The right side of her body was crushed. Her pelvis was shattered. Her brain was sheered. Lindsey was not expected to live through the night.

But Lindsey Bush beat the odds. Over the next 10 months she moved in and out of a comatose state, enduring many surgeries as doctors worked to put her body back together. Rehabilitation was grueling. She explains, “I had no ability to comprehend or think for myself. Everything had to be done for me. I had to start completely over and train my brain and my body to do it all again. I had to relearn how to eat, sleep, walk, talk, add, subtract, and read. I had to rely on everyone around me to keep me going.”

Keep going she did. Slowly but surely Lindsey Bush came back to life and it was very clear to her family and friends that she was just beginning to fulfill her purpose here on earth. Lindsey’s drive, determination

and sheer will to live was an inspiration to all around her. With her family by her side, Lindsey Bush claimed her new “normal.” Lindsey shares, “God kept me strong. We kept the faith. Together we kept pushing on, one day and one step at a time.”

The journey was not an easy one. Her mom had to quit work to care for her full-time. Resources were hard to find. Lindsey says, “It’s amazing how the system measures and defines need. You can’t measure hurt, pain, or loss. It’s about so much more than just money.” It took 8 years for her to get social security and disability benefits based upon their ‘need’, but it finally came. There was little support for her family as they too

Lindsey commits hundreds of hours a year to volunteering. She claims, “I don’t have it so bad. Making others smile helps. Helping others helps me keep it all in perspective.” Lindsey serves on the BSITFC’s Children and Youth Subcommittee, mentors teenagers transitioning to adulthood after TBI, lobbies for needed legislative changes to reduce boundaries and expand resources, advocates for intersection safety improvements and more. Lindsey explains, “Working with the Commission has helped me understand that recovery is about so much more than money. It’s about support, services and community. That’s what brings it all together.”

“Most people don’t really understand and appreciate how valuable each and every breath is. I do!”

– Lindsey Bush

worked to grieve, cope and adjust. A family friend referred them to the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission and that connection was the answer to their prayers. No longer did they feel they were on this journey alone.

With a new network of support and resources around her, Lindsey Bush was ready to build a new life. She explains, “Our family motto was ‘Wow is Me!’ not ‘Whoa is Me!’ Just because you have a disability doesn’t mean you can’t. It just means you have to find a different way to get there. Lindsey embodied that when she graduated with honors on time with her high school class in 2003 and went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in Education and Speech Pathology. An award from the Trust Fund is now enabling Lindsey to pursue graduate studies.

So, what’s ahead for Lindsey Bush? She says, “I want to help people and give back. I’ve found a gap that needs bridging; there is no law explicitly protecting the rights of citizens with traumatic brain injuries. I see the power of legislation and it needs to open doors, not close them. TBI injuries are not visible to the naked eye; I am on a mission to break down barriers, expand access to resources and make a difference for TBI survivors; I want all survivors to be great assets to society and have respectable lives worth living. Having a brain injury should not block one’s ability to sustain and live a great life. Anything is possible with determination, perseverance, and persistence.”

Bridging Gaps via The Central Registry

Developing effective, focused programs to prevent traumatic injuries and to address the community needs of injury survivors requires accurate, targeted data. This was the intent of the legislation that created the Central Registry, and that's the intent of the Commission as we work with communities, local and statewide organizations, schools, and government entities to improve opportunities for Georgians living with TBI and SCI.

We use the Central Registry data to:

Contact each newly-injured Georgian with information on available resources.

Identify trends – Information on increases or decreases in causes of injury and affected age groups is vital to our community partners for needs assessment and injury prevention.

Educate policy-makers and community stakeholders about the incidence of traumatic brain and spinal injuries, which ultimately illuminates the needs of injury survivors.

The Commission is committed to gathering accurate and useful information that will tangibly help the thousands of Georgians coping with new injuries each year and the agencies and service providers that support them.

“We are using the Central Registry data daily to apply for various grants. Having the local and statewide data allows me to respond quickly to our partners’ information needs, and of course helps to increase awareness of the needs of people with TBI and SCI.”

Paula Ruehling, Director of ADVANCE
Acquired Brain Injury Program of Goodwill of Savannah

Bridging Gaps via The Trust Fund

With funds received from a surcharge on DUI fines, the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is able to assist those with traumatic brain and/or spinal cord injuries in a tangible way – through awarding grants that can help alleviate even a portion of the often insurmountable costs of procuring the necessary equipment and services that help rebuild lives after a traumatic injury.

Unfortunately, as the collections chart shows, our Trust funds have never been lower.

We are doing our best to bridge the funding gaps and stretch resources as far as possible so to be able to touch as many lives as we can. We are constantly evaluating our distribution policies to make sure we are meeting the most urgent needs and providing support for those who need assistance most.

This year, the Commission was pleased to be able to award \$975,210 in goods and services to 165 injured people. As we continue to expand our stakeholder network, invite private donors to give, and educate communities about the importance and impact of collecting DUI fines, we are optimistic that the grant dollars in the Trust Fund will grow exponentially in coming years.

If you would like to learn how you help bridge the gap for TBI and SCI survivors through a donation to the Trust Fund, please contact our office.

CENTRAL REGISTRY DATA FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN & SPINAL INJURIES

Total Injuries: 71,511 (July, 2012)

By Age in Years	Emergency Department TBI Only	Hospital TBI Only	Hospital TBI + SCI
0 - 4	10,240	327	*
5 - 9	5,460	117	*
10 - 14	4,708	153	*
15 - 24	11,216	915	18
25 - 34	7,191	761	25
35 - 44	5,838	690	28
45 - 54	5,424	1,021	29
55 - 64	4,087	902	25
65 - 74	3,087	852	*
75+	6,305	2,023	*

By Sex

Male	33,443	4,602	118
Female	30,107	3,155	36

By Race

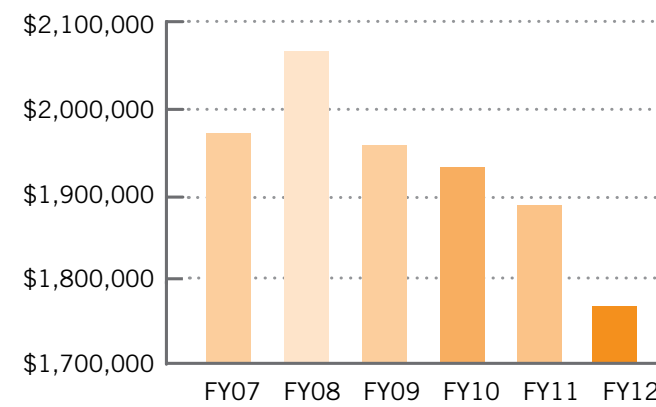
White	39,639	5,309	87
African American	19,683	1,837	54
Asian	722	87	*
Native Hawaiian /Pacific Islander	187	30	*
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	95	11	*
Unknown	322	46	*
Other	2,908	441	*
TOTAL	63,556	7,761	154

*fewer than 10

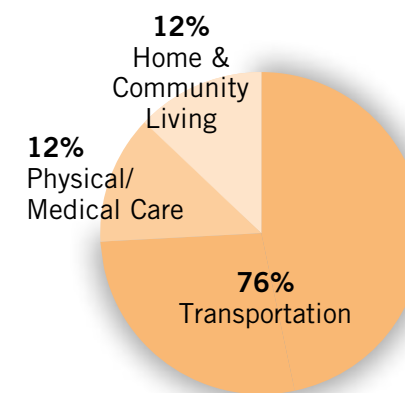
** Hospital SCI Only were fewer than 20 in every category

FUND DISTRIBUTION

Collections



Awards by Category*



\$975,210
in goods and services
were awarded to 165
injured Georgians in
FY2012.

Leaving a Legacy



In 2002 Bill DeAngelo wrapped up a job in Dallas, Texas and headed to Georgia to be closer to family. His management career was lucrative and life was very fast-paced. To decompress, Bill played tennis almost every day and biked up to 300 miles a week. In 2003 it was a fall from his bicycle that left him with a life-changing TBI.

After days in a coma, Bill woke up and had no idea who he was. After a week in the hospital Bill regained his strength and was released to begin his recovery. Little did Bill know that his journey was just beginning.

Not long after his release Bill blacked out while driving and crashed into oncoming traffic. He and others were lucky to survive. When Bill was told after this second TBI that he would never work full-time again, it hit hard. Bill struggled to grasp this life-altering reality.

The next year and a half was sheer torture. While his external physical wounds healed it was the cognitive limitations and psychological trauma that proved most

debilitating. He suffered from severe depression, cognitive fatigue, psychosis, spatial issues, delusion, rage, and extreme paranoia. Bill was desperate to find hope.

In 2005 Bill learned of the Trust Fund and applied for an award for much needed neuropsychological therapy. His award was granted and allowed him to get the counseling from a highly trained neuro-physiologist that specialized in TBI recovery. It was that connection that began to turn Bill's life around.

Bill began to learn over time how to cope and adapt to his brain's new way of thinking. He began to acknowledge and accept his new way of life and set new goals. In 2007, out of economic necessity,

Bill began trying to work again but due to severe cognitive fatigue he could only manage working one day a week. He shares, "The Trust Fund award for my structured therapy was a big bridge for me! It enabled me to get the help I needed to redefine and accept a new path of productivity for my life."

Bill's new path included reaching out and helping other TBI survivors find the help they needed. Since he couldn't work full-time, he began volunteering at the Veterans Administration to help enable new support groups. Through other organizations Bill engaged with a peer visitor program. He explains, "I came to understand that there is nothing more generous to give a survivor than another survivor, because we live it!" In talking with others Bill began to see gaps in care and services for TBI survivors all across the state, especially in inner city and rural areas. Hence, Bill set his mind to help bridge the gaps and applied for another Trust Fund award to buy a car. With that award Bill took his passion on the road to bridge more gaps.

Bill now works every day to build bridges for others. He started a statewide teleconference support group for TBI survivors along with a website – GeorgiaBrainTalk.Com – that allows them to better connect and network with each other. Bill is now evolving this endeavor into a nonprofit organization that will advocate, promote and support TBI survivors for years to come. He's also developing an outreach program via radio to connect more people to his support group. Bill shares, "The Trust Fund helped me get back to life and I want it to be a life with purpose. It's important to me that I use this TBI experience to give back and help others. I want the resources I create to live beyond me. This is my legacy."

Bridging Gaps via Stewardship



As the Stewardship Coordinator, I am passionate about informing hospitals and community-based organizations about the work of the Trust Fund Commission and the support we offer to TBI and SCI survivors. During FY2012 we educated more than 3,000 people from 68 hospitals and community-based organizations about our mission. The success of our work directly bridges to and from hospital case managers, therapists, social workers and other key agencies and organizations that refer patients to us every day.

In order for us to efficiently and effectively reach the multitudes in the TBI and SCI community, we need a multitude of volunteers who are willing to help. The BSITFC's Stewardship Program actively engages more than 100 volunteer stewards from 15 organizations that cover nine zones across Georgia to help us identify needs and guide survivors through our application process. These stewards are essential to the success of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission. Stewards broaden our reach, bridge the gaps, sustain the Trust Fund and enrich us with fresh perspective and expertise.

Our community connections continue to grow exponentially across the State and beyond. We are constantly on-the-go attending conferences, support groups, health fairs, community town hall meetings, legislative forums, and more. We're also actively engaged in the online dialogue via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs and e-newsletters to be thought leaders and to stay closely connected to the pulse of the constituents we serve. The Commission is dedicated to being good stewards of the time, talent and resources entrusted to us and we look forward to another exciting year in the field.

APPLYING FOR A TRUST FUND AWARD

The Trust Fund welcomes applications from all Georgia residents who have sustained a traumatic brain and/or spinal cord injury.

To qualify, applicants are asked to submit:

- medical documentation stating the nature and cause of their injury
- proof of Georgia residency
- at least one quote each for each service and/or item requested
- a completed application, including a daily living survey
- statement of annual income

Additionally applicants are asked to:

- explain how an award will increase their independence, offer long-term benefit and promote inclusion in their community
- sign and forward all release forms to the Commission

Applications are reviewed every month.

We are committed to improving the quality of life for the more than 70,000 Georgians who sustain a TBI/SCI each year. Applying for an award can be easily done online. If you have questions, feel free to call us toll free at 1-888-233-5760. We are happy to help you find the resources you need.

Four Steps to an Award

- 1:** Apply online at www.bsitf.state.ga.us or call toll-free (1-888-233-5760) for an application. As soon as your application is complete and all supporting document have been received, your application packet is sent to the Distribution Program Staff.
- 2:** The Distribution Committee reviews applications to ensure they conform to distribution policy and makes a recommendation to fund or not to the Commission.
- 3:** The Commission votes to adopt the recommendations made by the Distribution Committee, approximately four to six weeks from full completion of an application.
- 4:** The Commission sends funding recommendations to the Governor's Office for approval as required by our legislation. Applications that gain approval from the Governor are notified via letter from the Commission.



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

As we start the new year, I want to express my appreciation to our dedicated staff, commissioners, committee members, and other paid and volunteer staff for diligently remaining good stewards of the resources we are charged with managing during fiscally straining times. Over the past year, although we experienced further-reduced collections, we have held true to our mission and pressed forward efficiently and effectively to serve the needs of Georgia's TBI and SCI injury survivors.

Our collaborative initiatives with the Georgia Department of Public Safety presents exciting new opportunities to access applicable generic data that allows for improved communication of our state's needs, the Commission's opportunities, and the legislature's goals that include injury prevention, distribution of resources, and a generally more healthy Georgia population.

Commissioners and staff continue to reach out to the Courts, key agencies, legislators, and various associations to assert our constituents' thanks for continuing to support and enable DUI surcharge collections and remittances to the Commission.

We are pleased to report that we have secured the talent, allocated the funding, and are in motion to rollout in 2013 a revised application process and new database design that will make it easier for injured residents to reach us; us reach them, and the Commission and staff to more expeditiously process applications, make distributions, and report progress made.

Come January 2013 we will be launching beta tests of our new website and online application. We also plan to engage further medical facility staff, case management professionals, and constituents so the Commission can continue to reach and serve newly injured Georgians more quickly.

As we look ahead to the new year, we wish to congratulate two former Commission members who were elected members of the Georgia State House of Representatives: Representatives Rusty Kidd and Colonel Bill Hitchens. We look forward to seeing you at the Capitol and working with you under the Gold Dome.

I look forward to continuing the Trust Fund's Mission.

J.D. Frazier

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead

ANNUAL MEETING

At the end of each fiscal year the Commissioners and staff of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund meet to review the past year, adopt goals and objectives for the coming year and honor those who have undertaken special initiatives to further the mission and vision of the Commission on behalf of our stakeholders.

In addition to the regular annual meeting, held this year on July 26th at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, the Commission was pleased to convene a Town Hall meeting addressing the risk, care and consequences of traumatic brain injury, particularly focused on sports-related concussion. More than seventy-five people attended. The Commission thanks Shepherd Center, our panelists and the attending public for providing valuable insights into the challenges associated with this growing public health concern.

For 2012 the Commission honored the following individuals for their outstanding contributions to the Trust Fund and the citizens of the State of Georgia.

Outstanding Service Awards

Ken Mautner, MD (1) & David Wright, MD (2)

Emory University, Co-Chairmen of the Georgia Concussion Coalition

Under Dr. Mautner's and Dr. Wright's direction, the Georgia Concussion Coalition (GCC) grew from a work group of the Commission's Children and Youth Subcommittee to a 80+ member organization with statewide stakeholder representation. GCC has been responsible for disseminating critical information via a town hall format to engage Georgia communities in developing local awareness, training and education and solutions for concussion care, as well as engaging support for the introduction of HB 673 addressing pull-from-play and return-to-play protocols at the community sports program level. Their work is bridging the gaps between parents, players, coaches, doctors, trainers and many others to make youth sports safer for all children in Georgia.

Ray Lerer, Esq. (3)

The Commission honored Attorney Ray Lerer with the Outstanding Service Award for his many years of service as the legal advisor to the Commission. Ray was appointed to this position by the Attorney General's office and served the Commission for over ten years. Ray worked diligently to ensure the Commission's policies, practices and procedures were commensurate with the high standards of the State of Georgia. Ray was particularly sensitive to the circumstances of our applicants and their families and always sought to ensure that fairness and integrity informed all Commission decisions. After thirty-two years of service to the Georgia Attorney General's office Ray retired in June of 2012. The Commission is grateful to have served alongside this outstanding public servant.

Larry Huggins Memorial Award

Cathi Dugger, Physical Therapist, Shepherd Center (4)

As chair of the Spinal Cord Injury Work Group of the Commission's Children and Youth Subcommittee, Cathi Dugger led efforts to improve people's understanding of the needs of children with spinal cord injuries. Under her leadership, the Children and Youth Subcommittee worked with a metro area school system to introduce an injury prevention curriculum. She also developed multiple training tools and education materials that are widely used to aid in the transition of children with spinal cord injuries back to school and community. Her service and impact is far reaching and will serve many generations to come.



OUR COMMISSIONERS

Our Commission Members are a dedicated, diverse group of individuals from around the state. Each one is committed to improving the effectiveness of the Trust Fund by overseeing its operations and disbursements.

The Governor appoints 10 members for two-year terms, although many of our members serve longer. To ensure a breadth of experience and opinion, the Commission's Governor appointees must consist of: seven individuals or family members with traumatic brain or spinal cord injury and three representatives from medical or other relevant professions. Six Commissioners are appointed by state agencies.



Bob Bauer, PhD (1), is our first Commissioner from the Valdosta area of South Georgia, appointed by the Governor in 2011. Bob recently retired from Valdosta State University as the chair of the Department of Psychology and Counseling. Bob is a former Peace Corps volunteer and is also a member of the state board of directors for Georgia Family Connection, chair of the Lowndes/Valdosta Commission for Children and Youth, and a board member of Elderhostel, Inc., an international educational program for persons 60 years of age and older. Bob is Chairman of the Commission's Advisory committee.

Henry Craig (2) was appointed to the Commission by the Governor in 2010. Henry's son sustained a TBI in a motorcycle accident. Henry is retired from the United States Army and Continental Airlines where he was a pilot. He is active in local community organizations and is an elected County Commissioner in Baldwin County Georgia. Henry chairs the Commission's Distribution Committee, the Distribution and Application Revision Committee and is a member of the Executive Committee.

Lisa Dawson, MPH (3) Treasurer, was appointed to the Commission as the representative of the Georgia Department of Public Health. Lisa previously served as a Commissioner from 2007-2008. Lisa is the Director of Public Health's Injury Prevention Section and is active as a member of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety – Safety Advisory Board, Emory Center for Injury Control, SAFE KIDS Georgia and currently serves on the Commission's Executive and Finance committees.

Andrew Dennison, MD (4), is a Governor's appointee; first appointed in 2010. Andrew is a physician at Atlanta's Shepherd Center. A native of Marietta, Dr. Dennison attended medical school at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and completed a residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Baylor College of Medicine/University of Texas-Houston. He also completed a fellowship in Traumatic Brain Injury at Carolinas Rehabilitation in Charlotte, NC. He is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and is an active member in the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. He is a member of the Commission's Executive Committee.

Brian Dowd (not pictured), was appointed to the Commission as the representative of the Georgia Department of Community Health where Brian is Program Director – Waiver Programs in the Division of Medicaid/Aging and Special Populations. Brian is a member of the Commission's Distribution committee.

Major Henry Fielding (5), is the appointee of the Georgia Department of Public Safety where he has served over thirty-six years with the Georgia State Patrol and is currently Headquarters Adjutant.

Joseph D. Frazier (6), Chairman, is the President and CEO of Para/Quad Services, Inc. He was originally appointed to the Commission by the Governor in 2007. J.D. has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards; was the Immediate Past President of the Kennesaw State University Alumni Association (2009-2010); is the treasurer of the Georgia Association of Community Care Providers; and is a registered peer supporter for Shepherd Center and a certified Medicaid Peer Supporter. He endowed a scholarship in 1996 for students with disabilities at KSU. He speaks publicly about diversity awareness and is an advocate for disability rights. In addition to serving as Commission Chairman, he also serves as Chair of the Executive Committee.

Gina Gelinas (7) joined the Commission in October of 2007 as the representative for the Department of Education. Gina is the Program Manager of the Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT), a special project of the Georgia Department of Education's Division for Special Education Supports. Certified in speech-language pathology, she provides learning and technical support services to local school system personnel who work with students who need assistive technology. Gina serves on the Children & Youth Committee.

Cheryl Harris (8) was appointed to the Commission in 2012. She has worked in the Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services since 2007 and has served as the Program Manager for the Aging & Disabilities Resource Connection for four years. In this position she is responsible for expanding aging & disability partnerships statewide and for providing technical assistance and guidance to local ADRC programs. Cheryl has over thirty years of experience in long-term services and supports including serving as a Long-Term Care Ombudsman for 20 years. She is committed to working with the ADRC to provide information and assistance that will help individuals to avoid institutionalization or to transition from institutions back to their homes and communities.

Randy Owens (9), was appointed to the Commission by Governor Nathan Deal. A Hall County native from Gainesville, GA Randy is currently employed at Gainesville Internal Medicine. He serves as a board member of Challenged Child and Red Rabbit Transit and is an advisor to Northeast Georgia Medical Center. He is co-founder of Our Neighbor Inc., a nonprofit that serves the needs of those with limitations and enables them to be active in the community. Because of Owens' permanent injury that resulted from a car accident, Challenged Child and Friends was founded. He has been an advocate for young adults with disabilities ever since leaving high school.

Barbara Richards (10) was appointed to the Commission as the representative of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency where she is a Regional Director. Barbara received her Masters degree in Education from the University of Georgia. She has worked for the New York City Department of Aging and for Goodwill Industries of North Georgia. Barbara is a member of the Georgia Rehabilitation Association.

Timothy Wall (11) was appointed by the Governor in 2010. He is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist with a BS and MS in Sport Psychology from Georgia Southern University. He is a wheelchair tennis enthusiast, having competed in regional championships since his spinal cord injury in 2001. He brings his personal experience working with organizations that provide recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities and a recreation/respite background to the Commission.

Jane Warnock (12), secretary, was reappointed by Governor Nathan Deal to the Commission in May 2010. She has been an advocate for people with disabilities since her daughter, Christy, sustained a traumatic brain injury in a car crash in 2002. Jane serves on the Commission's Executive, Finance and Public Policy Committees.

OUR STAFF

Members of the Commission staff are dedicated professionals focused on connecting survivors and their families with the resources they need to rebuild their lives and thrive.



The Commission At-A-Glance

We Have Popular Support. In November 1998, Georgia voters overwhelmingly approved (by 73%) a constitutional amendment to create a Trust Fund for traumatic brain and spinal injuries, paid for by a surcharge on drunk driving fines. This landmark legislation won by a margin of greater than 2-to-1.

We are Guided by Those with First-hand Knowledge. The idea of the Trust Fund and the advocacy efforts on behalf of the founding legislation was driven by people with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and spinal cord injury (SCI). Because of their first-hand experiences, they knew what was most important for people with these traumatic injuries--and what was missing in the range of services and resources available. They dreamed of an agency that understood the lifelong needs of people with traumatic injuries and that was committed to supporting injured individuals at different stages in their life – not just in the critical moments after the injury occurs.

Additionally, more than half of the people who serve on the Commission must have a brain or spinal cord injury or be a family member of a person with an injury. Other members are specialists in the field, or work with organizations that provide services to people with traumatic injuries. Their collective knowledge and experience governs our day-to-day decisions, guides our recommendations for award distributions, and informs our public policy agenda.

We Connect People To Their Communities. Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal injuries deserve lives of independence and inclusion, lives rich with vision and possibilities. Trust Fund awards assist individuals with injuries in reaching their chosen goals.

Trust Fund awards change lives.

