



## CDC's Report to Congress on Traumatic Brain Injury Epidemiology and Rehabilitation

### Recommendations for Addressing Critical Gaps

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) can lead to lifelong problems that not only affect the lives of individuals and their families, but also have a significant impact on society and the economy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed a Report to Congress, entitled *Traumatic Brain Injury in the United States: Epidemiology and Rehabilitation*, to describe:

- How many people are affected by TBI and how their lives are impacted; and
- What is known about the effectiveness of TBI rehabilitation.

This summary provides a snapshot of key recommendations from the full report.

### What's the Issue?

A TBI can affect how a person feels, thinks, acts, and learns. These effects can last long after a person's medical treatment and rehabilitation are completed. Falls and motor vehicle crashes, are the leading causes of TBI overall. Understanding the health effects and available rehabilitation services necessary to improve quality of life is vital for reducing the burden and cost of this injury.

### What Can Be Done?

The goal of TBI rehabilitation is to improve the overall quality of life for persons living with TBI. Rehabilitation interventions and services can help those living with TBI by improving their ability to do daily tasks independently, engage with friends and family, and participate in their community. As outlined in CDC's report, critical research gaps need to be addressed to improve guidance about how to best enhance quality of life for individuals living with TBI. CDC's recommendations are focused on improving rehabilitation research and service delivery in ways that will better the lives of persons living with TBI and their families.

In one year alone,  
TBIs accounted for  
approximately:

**2.2 million**  
EMERGENCY  
DEPARTMENT VISITS

**280,000**  
HOSPITALIZATIONS

**50,000**  
DEATHS



**The FY 2016  
President's Budget  
includes an increase of  
\$5 million for CDC to improve  
estimates of sports- and  
recreation-related concussions  
experienced by youth.**



## **CDC Recommendations**

CDC identified the following recommendations for researchers, public health practitioners, and decision makers:

### ***Improve Estimates of TBI***

- Collect data on how many TBI patients are treated in out-patient clinics, urgent care facilities, and other non-hospital settings.
- Calculate the number of TBIs that occur within each state.
- Estimate the number of persons living with a disability caused by a TBI.
- Develop and implement a surveillance system to improve estimates of sports- and recreation-related concussions experienced by youth.

### ***Enhance Measures Used to Evaluate Rehabilitation Success***

- Increase the use of health information technology (e.g., electronic health records) to improve tracking of patient progress and determine rehabilitation effectiveness.
- Develop comprehensive measures that can better determine the effectiveness of rehabilitation therapies.
- Adapt and test promising measures within specific populations, including children, older adults, and racial/ethnic groups.

### ***Improve TBI Rehabilitation Research and Service Delivery***

- Conduct studies examining the optimal timing, intensity, and frequency of rehabilitation therapies.
- Develop service delivery models that better connect patients and their families to the clinical and community services that support lifelong needs.
- Increase the use of alternative sources for service delivery, such as telemedicine, to improve access to rehabilitation services for those in remote or rural areas.
- Expand the use of promising technologies (e.g., GPS, paging systems, and smartphones) to aid with rehabilitation.

The public health burden of TBI is substantial—affecting the lives of millions nationwide. While prevention of TBI is the key public health strategy for reducing the burden, it is imperative for those in public health, clinical practice, and research to design and evaluate effective rehabilitation strategies that reduce the negative health effects of TBI. However, access to services may be limited for those in need due to cost, geographic restrictions, and insurance. Filling critical research gaps, increasing access to care, and improving the effectiveness of rehabilitation services can help lead the way to improve the overall quality of life for persons living with TBI and their loved ones.

**To learn more please visit [www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury](http://www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury)**