**California Traumatic Brain injury (TBI) Advisory Board**

**Advisory Board Meetings**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, July 21, 2025**

**9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

1. **Call to Order**

The regular meeting for the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Advisory Board Meeting called to order by Theresa Woo, Chair, at 9:05 a.m.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Katie Shinoda, Vice-Chair, led introductions.

Board Members Present:

* Dan Clark
* Heidi Frye
* Dr. Vivian Harvey
* Todd Higgins
* Dr. Daniel Ignacio
* Randy Dinning
* Erin Johnson
* Ryan Johnson
* Vince Martinez
* Michael Roscoe
* Dr. Katie Shinoda (Vice-Chair)
* Kristie Warren
* Theresa Woo (Chair)

Board members not present:

* Dr. Steve Chan
* Dr. Henry Huie
* Esther Stauffer

Members of the Public:

* Brenda Plechaty, Traumatic Injury Caregivers Support Group
* Crystal Sudano, public
* Tanya Thee, TBI Grant administrator

Department of Rehabilitation Staff:

* LaCandice Ochoa, Deputy Director of Independent Living and Community Access Division
* Maria Aliferis-Gjerde, California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) Executive Officer
* Sarah Harris, Sectional Chief of Independent Living and Assistive Technology
* Peter Saechao, TBI Board Liaison

1. **Housekeeping**

Peter Saechao, DOR TBI Board Liaison, reviewed housekeeping items.

1. **Public Comment**

There were no public comments

1. **DOR Updates**

Maria Aliferis-Gjerde provided updates.

* Updates were given on the state and federal budgets, noting no major impacts to the TBI program but impacts on other systems serving people with disabilities.
* The contract with San Diego State University regarding the needs assessment is expected to begin on August 1.
* The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) conference is scheduled for October 27-30 in Portland, Maine, and out of state travel approval is pending.

1. **LaCandice Ochoa, Deputy Director of Independent Living and Community Access Division meet and greet**

* LaCandice Ochoa introduced herself and gave an overview of her background and a few of her priorities for the department.

1. **Sarah Harris, Sectional Chief of Independent Living and Assistive Technology meet and greet**

* Sarah Harris introduces herself as the Section Chief over Independent Living and Assistive Technology, and discussed her experience in disability services and TBI.

1. **Board Internal Business**

Theresa Woo, Chair, asked for comments regarding the April 14, 2024, TBI Board Meeting Minutes.

Board Comments – None

Public Comments – None

Todd Higgins motioned to approve the minutes. Dr. Vivian Harvey seconded the motion. Peter Saechao called for a board vote. Vivian Harvey, Todd Higgins, Dr. Daniel Ignacio, Erin Johnson, Vince Martinez, Dr. Katie Shinoda, Kristie Warren, and Theresa Woo all voted to approve. Motion passed.

1. **Subcommittee Reports**

The following subcommittee committees reported on their individual projects and progress:

**Data Analytics Committee (DAC)**

* Dr. Daniel Ignacio (Lead)

Dr. Daniel Ignacio provided an update on the DAC's three projects: needs assessment, publication manuscript, and data collection and analysis.

* + The needs assessment is progressing, with initial meetings with San Diego State expected in August.
  + The publication manuscript is in the final stages of review and will be published soon.
  + The CATBI packet is being developed to evaluate high-yield factors for TBI survivors, including cognitive, physical, and emotional symptoms.

**Public Policy and Funding Committee (PPFC)**

* Dr. Katie Shinoda (Lead)

Dr. Katie Shinoda provided an update on the PPFC's three projects: sustainable funding, program certification recommendation, and updating the TBI state plan.

* + The program certification recommendation includes a letter to DOR requesting an assessment of the current funding model and potential certification processes.
  + A motion was made to bring the letter to a vote for full board approval.
  + The TBI State Plan is being reorganized to be more concise and actionable, with a focus on smart goals and interagency collaboration.
  + The Board agreed to move forward with the letter to DOR requesting an assessment of the current funding model and potential certification processes.

A motion to approve the program certification recommendation letter was made by Dr. Vivian Harvey and seconded by Dr. Daniel Ignacio. Vivian Harvey, Todd Higgins, Dr. Daniel Ignacio, Erin Johnson, Vince Martinez, Dr. Katie Shinoda, Kristie Warren, and Theresa Woo all voted to approve. Motion passed.

**Education and Public Outreach Committee (EPOC)**

* Dr. Vivian Harvey (Lead)

Dr. Vivan Harvey presented the TBI 101 slide presentation, discussing objectives of presentation such as introducing people to TBI, raising awareness, and introducing community resources.

* + The Committee agreed to review and make edits to slides with feedback from today’s meeting.
  + TBI 101 slide presentation will be reviewed by the TBI Survivors committee for feedback.
  + The Committee will motion for a vote of approval on the TBI 101 slide at the next quarterly meeting in October.

**Brain Injury Survivor Committee (BISC)**

* Todd Higgins (Lead)

Todd Higgins reported on the Brain Injury Survivor Committee work.

* + The Committee reviewed mission statement for clarity and relevance.
  + Update focused on increasing public outreach and engagement with TBI survivors.
  + The Committee wants to build more grassroots support for the Committee and Advisory Board.
  + The Committee will review the TBI 101 Slide and report back any feedback at their next meeting.

1. **Lunch**
2. **Medicaid 1115 Demonstration Waiver Presentation**

Brian Hansen, Policy Advisor, California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

Brian Hansen presented on the Medi-Cal 1115 Demonstration Waiver, a program designed to mitigate poor health outcomes for people released from incarceration (state prisons, county jails, or youth detention facilities). Some of the presentations’ highlights included the following:

* + The presentation highlighted the high rates of suicide, mental health decompensation, substance use overdose, emergency room visits, and recidivism in the short period just post-release. And a lack of a system to catch and continue care upon release is a major contributor.
  + The presentation discussed how the 1115 Waiver allows the state to use federal Medicaid funds to provide health care services to incarcerated individuals up to 90 days prior to their release, which is an exception to the general rule prohibiting federal Medicaid funding for inmates.

Board Comments:

* + Dr. Katie Shinoda: Are the eligibility criteria based on self-report or a clinician's screening? Self-reporting a condition is sufficient to meet the eligibility bar for the program.

1. **The Disability Action Center (DAC), Site Presentation**

Carolyn Nava, Community Relations Director, Disability Action Center (DAC) and Landa Bell Carson President, Brain Injury Coalition and DAC TBI Community Coordinator.

The DAC, a nonprofit Independent Living Center in rural Northern California, partners with the Brain Injury Coalition (BIC) presented information regarding their site. Some of the highlights included the following:

* DAC currently focuses on supporting TBI clients in 4 out of 8 assigned counties in their service territory, with plans for expansion to other remote areas.
* The DAC/BIC partnership provides a range of therapeutic and skill-building activities for TBI survivors: art therapy, music therapy, and book club.

Board Comments:

* Dr. Katie Shinoda: commended DAC for showing a commitment to excellence and providing services that are above and beyond the standard offerings of an independent living center.

1. **Mercy** **General Hospital Site Presentation**

Dr. Katie Shinoda is the TBI site representative and program coordinator from Mercy General Hospital, detailing the TBI navigation program in Sacramento.

The TBI Site is a satellite facility of Mercy General Hospital. The outpatient center also provides physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and neuropsychology. Some of the highlights included the following:

* + The TBI Navigation Program at Mercy General Hospital provides a comprehensive blend of clinical support, educational resources, and community integration services, ranging from short-term case management and in-depth pre-vocational assessments to ongoing virtual and in-person support groups and specialized concussion education classes.
  + The site organizes a quarterly meeting to share information, resources, and referrals among local organizations. Participants include all four major local medical providers (Dignity Health, Sutter Rehab, UC Davis, Kaiser) and various colleges and support agencies.

1. **California State University Sacramento (CSUS) Presentation**

Lisa D’Angelo, speech pathologist, professor at Sacramento state, representing California Speech and Hearing Association (CSHA) and TBI Advisory Board.

Laura Wasco and Kareem (Kai) Jackson, Ball/Frost Group, supporting policy and legislative projects with CSHA.

Presentation on school-age TBI and support. Some of the highlights included the following:

* Presentation discussed that TBI has high rates among young children and teens.
* Often under-identified, under-reported, and misdiagnosed (commonly as anxiety, ADHD, depression).
* Presenters and members discussed increased awareness, prevention, and early identification. Strengthen hospital-to-school communication pathways. Foster cross-system collaboration to support students with TBI.

1. **Summary and Action Items**

Peter Saechao referenced the next board meeting will be October 20, 2025. Presentations and action items will be sent shortly after the end of the meeting. Meeting minutes will be sent out by October 6th.

* The approved program certification recommendation letter will move forward to DOR.
* TBI 101 presentation will undergo additional edits b for board vote at the next meeting.

Board Comments - None

Public Comments – None

1. **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

1. **Adjournment**

Todd Higgins motioned to adjourn, and Dr. Katie Shinoda seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.