

# The Cranium Chronicles

## Congress Passes Traumatic Brain Injury Bill

Congress passed legislation to reauthorize the Traumatic Brain Injury Bill and it is now ready to be sent to the President.

### Facts about this bill:

- Extends the authorization of such sums as may be necessary for the CDC research, public education, and state registry programs; NIH research; and HRSA programs through 2012.

- Establishes several new studies, including a study through the CDC and NIH to determine the incidence and prevalence of traumatic brain injury, identify common

therapeutic interventions, and develop rehabilitation guidelines.

- Establishes a CDC/NIH study to identify the best methods of coordinating prevalence data, in order to ensure that national research takes into account the incidence of brain injuries among our nation's veterans and that current information about diagnostic tools and treatments are shared.

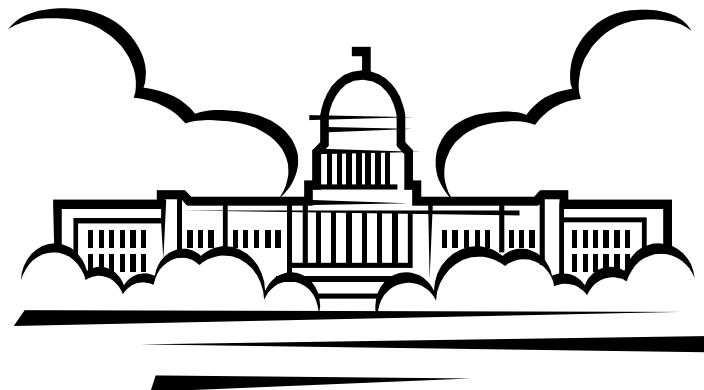
- Amends the HRSA demonstration projection program such that American Indian consortia can apply for funding, that the projects are redefined to

improve access to rehabilitation, and the grants are limited to 3 years.

- Requires the Administrator of HRSA and the ADA Commissioner to coordinate data collection regarding protection and advocacy. It stipulates that, in any year where \$6 million is appropriated for the HRSA protection and advocacy services program, 2% is used for a grant providing for training and technical assistance to protection and advocacy systems.

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## DID YOU KNOW????

- The most common neurological condition reported after brain injury is migraines/headaches
- 5.3 million people are living with TBI in the United States
- Falls are the leading cause of TBI
- Males are 1.5 times as likely as females to sustain a TBI
- The adult brain weights 3.5 pounds
- Incidence of TBI is highest in the 0-4 year old age range
- A brain injury is often the result of two injuries- "the primary injury" which is the initial blow to the brain and "the secondary injury" which is swelling and contusions to the brain
- The brain has two hemispheres- the left hemisphere controls the right side of the body and the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body

*Medical experts are witnessing an increase in the number of brain injuries sustained by soldiers fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, prompting Veterans Affairs Hospitals to set up special centers to handle the severe cases.*



## New Hope for People Struggling with Brain Injuries

Seven years after a head-on collision left her with a traumatic brain injury, and long after she had given up hope, Rebecca Ratliff says she's finally found the missing piece to recovery. And it's coming from a surprising source: brain training company LearningRx whose main clients are kids struggling in school.

"I would have given anything to know about Learning Rx after my accident says the 54-year

-old Internet marketing expert. "But after nine months of treatment, the doctors told me there was nothing more I could do".

The Plano, TX resident now realizes what her team of neurologists, neuropsychologists and therapists missed: her cognitive skills ability dropped drastically after the crash. Because of that, Ratliff struggled with many of the common long-term

symptoms of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, including memory loss, poor concentration, and the inability to perform sequential tasks.

"The right method of training can significantly build up those weak brain areas and restore function," says Learning Rx Founder Dr. Ken Gibson. "The training forces the brain to better use and/or grow more neural pathways, and that makes it work

## Help for People with Brain Injuries con'td. from page 2

Faster, smarter, more efficiently. Suddenly, things you really struggled with can be easy."

Building a better brain through LearningRx training starts with a cognitive skills test that reveals any weak mental skills like memory, attention, and logic and reasoning. Then trainers use intense, one-on-one, game-like exercises to build up those weak skills.

Ratliff has done about 6 weeks worth of training, four hours a week. She says she's already making huge gains in memory and other areas. "I have much better focus, and my retention is higher, and it's easier for me to go into my brain and pull things out than it was in the past."

Friends have noticed the change in Ratliff too, and so has her boss, President of Top SEO Marketing, Jessica Faltot. "She's better at communicating, at understanding instructions, at remembering things, and her ability to visualize has improved 100%. What's most amazing though, is she's so much more confident."

New-found confidence was the transforming result Laura Stemle saw in her son Luke when he went through LearningRx Training in Jupiter, Florida 15 months after his brain injury. "His reading fluency and comprehension have sky-

rocketed," says Stemle, "But the confidence boosting was equally important. It gave him an internal drive that he never really had."

Post-test results show the huge benefits the Learning Rx training gave Luke. His auditory processing and sound blending skills jumped more than seven years, and in the areas of visual processing and Logic & Reasoning, he gained more than 4 years of growth.

The number of people who may benefit from this type of training is staggering. According to the Center for Disease Control 1.4 million people sustain a TBI each year in the United States. About 75% of those injuries are minor concussions, but many have much more damaging consequences. The CDC estimates that as a result of TBI, at least 5.3 million Americans currently have a long-term need for help to perform activities of daily living.

Ratliff says that was the toughest part for her, so tough it sent her into a spiraling depression, which is another common symptom of TBI.

"I have two degrees, and graduated at the top of my class" says Ratliff. "And after the accident I was struggling to butter toast."

Ratliff thinks she could have prevented that depression if

she had LearningRx training at the time. "It would have moved me along the healing process so much faster both mentally and emotionally. To get functioning again, to be able to make toast again, would have helped so much more than anything that was offered."

LearningRx can now offer that help at 60 centers nationwide according to LearningRx Vice President of Research and Development, Tanya Mitchell who says she's not surprised the training can fill the gap where traditional medicine leaves off. "New brain science proves the brain can grow and change at any age, and for years we've known that we had the best and fastest method of doing that. We help kids conquer some pretty severe learning disabilities like dyslexia and ADHD. That same training can certainly help people suffering from TBI, no matter how long it's been since their injury."

So 7 years after an air bag took away much of her life, Ratliff says she has hope again. "I really feel like I will make a full recovery now, and be able to get all of my abilities back. I'm just surprised the answer is coming from a place I always thought just helped kids learn to read."

To learn more, visit [www.learningrx.com](http://www.learningrx.com)

***LearningRx plans to offer free cognitive testing to BIANC members who reside in Cary, Apex, or Morrisville. Cognitive testing can assess memory skills, achievement skills, and executive processing skills, as well as identify strengths and areas that may need improvement.***

***For more information please contact Learning Rx at:***

***462-1215***

## Interested in getting a Brain Injury Awareness License Plate?

BIANC must receive 300 orders for the NC DMV to print up our Brain Injury Awareness tag and for an order to be placed. To place an order for a license plate, go to [www.bianc.net](http://www.bianc.net) to download an application.



The Cary Brain Injury Support Group meets the first Monday of every month from 6:30—8:00 p.m. at WakeMed Cary Hospital.

### Upcoming Topics for the Cary Brain Injury Support Group:

May 5th—Positive Thinking and Self-Esteem

June 2nd—Exercise and Nutrition

July 7th—Recycling and “Going Green”

Please feel free to contact one of the Co-Leaders of the Cary Brain Injury Support Group for more information-

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