

Important First Steps

What should I do next?

1. Get in touch with local support groups or contact the Brain Injury Association of Texas for a list of support groups. Support groups can be an invaluable resource for information on a wide variety of topics, including treatment facilities and specific programs that may be available in your area. Contact the Brain Injury Association of Texas at (800) 392-0040 or www.biatx.org

2. Keep a daily journal of patient's mental and physical changes. Keep a list of questions for the doctor or others on the treatment team. Keep track of treatments, medications and results.

3. Establish a support system of family and friends. Organize family and friends to visit the patient, support the family, and help with tasks needed to prepare for the future.

4. Contact the case manager at your hospital. Identify the case manager who will be working with the patient. Discuss with the case manager the patient's progress and potential needs upon discharge. Get help in identifying supports and services that may be available after discharge.

5. Call 2-1-1 for information about community resources and non-emergency health related services. 2-1-1 is the telephone number for free information and referrals to health and human service and community organizations (public, private and nonprofit human service providers). Specialists are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with multilingual capabilities, as well as accessible services for persons with disabilities. 2-1-1 is not accessible through all cell phone providers.

6. Apply for SSI / Medicaid immediately. Supple-

mental Security Income (SSI) is a program of the Social Security Administration that provides monthly payments to people who are, among other qualifiers, disabled and have limited income and/or resources. Parents need not be eligible themselves in order for a disabled child to receive SSI. If eligible for SSI, the patient usually can get Medicaid, health insurance which is tied into the SSI benefits package. Discuss this with your case manager and call (800) 772-1213, visit www.ssa.gov/disability, or contact your local Social Security office for more information.

7. Apply for SSDI / Medicare immediately. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) provides monthly payments for workers and eligible members of their family if an illness or injury is expected to keep the worker from working for a year or longer. Medicare is a health insurance program tied into SSDI. A new beneficiary must wait 24 months after SSDI benefits begin to receive Medicare coverage, in addition to the 5-month waiting period after the disability onset. Enrollment in the Medicare program is automatic for SSDI recipients - no application process is necessary. No monthly premium is charged for hospital insurance to persons receiving SSDI benefits. Discuss this with your case manager and call (800) 772-1213, visit www.ssa.gov/disability, or contact your local Social Security office for more information.

8. Talk with your hospital case manager about services for which the patient may be eligible. Apply immediately - some programs allow immediate access while others may have a waiting list. Contact each agency directly for information on any additional programs that may be available.

• **TexCare Partnership:** if the patient is under the age of 19. This program provides health insurance to eligible children through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Apply by calling (800) 647-6558 or by visiting www.texcarepartnership.com to download an application.

• **Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services (CRS):** This program provides payment for inpatient comprehensive medical rehabilitation; outpatient services such as occupational, physical, speech and cognitive therapies; and post-acute TBI services to help with injury-related cognitive difficulties. Eligibility is determined by the Texas

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). Contact DARS at (800) 628-5115 or visit www.dars.state.tx.us

• **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR):** This program provides a variety of services designed to help prepare for, find, and keep employment. For more information contact the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). Contact DARS at (800) 628-5115 or visit www.dars.state.tx.us

• **Primary Home Care (PHC):** This program provides home care services, which can include attendant care and homemaking services. It is available to eligible clients whose health problems cause them to be functionally limited in performing activities of daily living. For information, call the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Office of Ombudsman at (888) 834-7406 to obtain the phone number for the Primary Home Care program in your area or visit www.hhsc.state.tx.us go to "Services Search" then to "Search for State Programs" and type PHC in the "Keyword Search" bar.

• **Early Childhood Intervention (ECI):** if the patient is under the age of three. A diagnosis is not necessary for a referral. This program helps families help their children reach their potential through developmental services. Services are available throughout Texas. Eligibility is determined by ECI. Contact ECI at (800) 250-2246 or visit www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis

• **Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP):** if the patient is under age 21. Eligibility is based on the child's income, not the family's. This program can provide support services such as respite, home modifications and adaptive aids. Contact the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) at (877) 438-5658 or visit www.hhsc.state.tx.us and go to "Services Search" then to "Search for State Programs" and type MDCP in the "Keyword Search" bar.

• **Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) Program:** any age if qualifying condition or disability occurs before the age of 22. This program provides home- and community-based services such as respite care, nursing services, habilitation, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy,

psychological services, specialized therapies, adaptive aids/supplies, home modifications, and independent case management. For more information contact the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) at (877) 438-5658 or visit www.hhsc.state.tx.us and go to "Services Search" then to "Search for State Programs" and type CLASS in the "Keyword Search" bar.

• **Community Based Alternative Program (CBA) :** if the patient is age 21 or over. This program provides an array of home- and community-based services to aged and disabled adults as cost-effective alternatives to nursing facility care. Services include personal assistance, adaptive aids, medical supplies, adult foster care, assisted living/residential care, nursing, home-delivered meals, rehabilitative therapies, respite care, emergency response, and minor home modifications. For more information, call the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Office of Ombudsman at (888) 834-7406 to obtain the phone number for the Community Based Alternative or visit www.hhsc.state.tx.us and go to "Services Search" then to "Search for State Programs" and type Community Based Alternative in the "Keyword Search" bar.

• **Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN):** if the patient is under the age of 21 (or any age with cystic fibrosis). A range of programs is available to help arrange for medical care and pay medical bills. Apply through the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Contact your regional DSHS office at (800) 252-8023 or visit www.dshs.state.tx.us/cshcn

• **Individuals with TBI may qualify for some services offered through Mental Retardation Authorities,** depending on the individual's age when the injury occurred. Services include those funded by state appropriated dollars if the injury occurred prior to the individual's 18th birthday. If the injury occurred before the 22nd birthday, then an individual may be eligible for Medicaid waiver services, i.e., Home and Community-based Services (HCS) and Texas Home Living (TxHmL) waivers. Individuals and/or their family members should contact the local Community Mental Health & Mental Retardation Center in their living area for an explanation of services.

• **Crime Victims Compensation:** if the patient is the innocent victim of a crime. Claims may be made for benefits up to a total of \$50,000 for a variety of expenses. This program is the payor of last resort, and eligibility is determined by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). Contact the OAG at (800) 983-9933 or visit www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/cvc.shtml

9. Contact the patient's school immediately. If the patient is enrolled in school, contact the school principal to arrange for the student's return to school or for services while not in school. If the student is enrolled in college or technical school, contact the school's Disability Office.

10. Explore guardianship. If the patient is nearing or over the age of 16, and if there are potential problems with the patient's ability to consent to treatment, consider consulting an attorney about types of guardianship to help in securing necessary treatment for the patient without delay.

11. If you are veteran, please consult the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center at (800) 870-9244 or visit <http://www.dvbic.org> or contact your local VA hospital for information and referral.

12. Visit the Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council Website at: www.dshs.state.tx.us/braininjury

This publication may be ordered online at the DSHS Forms and Literature catalog at <http://dbs.dshs.state.tx.us/mamd/litcat/default.asp>

This publication is available in English and Spanish in pdf format at www.dshs.state.tx.us/braininjury. Click on publications.

Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council
www.dshs.state.tx.us/braininjury

Brain Injury Association of Texas
800-392-0040 Toll-free Helpline
www.biatx.org

Brain Injury Association of America
800-444-6443
www.biausa.org

Texas Health and Human Services Commission
www.hhsc.state.tx.us

Early Childhood Intervention
800-250-2246
www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis

TexCare Partnership
800-647-6558
www.texcarepartnership.com

Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
800-628-5115
www.dars.state.tx.us

Children with Special Health Care Needs
Texas Department of State Health Services
800-252-8023
www.dshs.state.tx.us/cshcn

Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services
888-834-7406
www.dads.state.tx.us

Texas Office of the Attorney General
800-983-9933
www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/cvc.shtml/

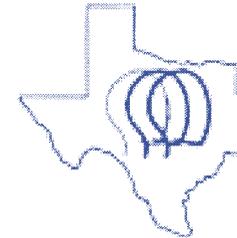
Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center
800-870-9244
www.dvbic.org



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Important First Steps in Supporting a Loved One with a Brain Injury

Dealing with a brain injury is never easy. The tips and suggestions included in this booklet are intended to help answer the question, "What should I do next?"



1-800-392-0040