

January 3, 2021

To Whom it May Concern,

It has come to my attention that funding cuts are having a drastically amount of the needed funding being considered for the ND Brain Injury Network.

I have had the impacts of several different types of head injuries in my 70 years. In the beginning of my injuries at the age of 15 or 16 it has been a psychological nightmare to live with. The struggles I had growing through the different injuries and not having any type of help for healing and recovering. There are still struggles I live with daily, for instance trying to write this letter so that you can understand or realize how greatly this funding is needed to be able to continue its guiding me with resources that are not available. Especially in this rural western part of the state, on our reservations and to reach other people who have no knowledge of what life has been or is like for me or others who live with this.

I am telling you about how their programs help support me. I am one of North Dakota's American Indians who uses their online support groups, and the webinars of their education for people who have experienced, lived through and struggle living with these very difficult traumatic brain injuries(concussions) that people, doctors, hospitals, educators, legal systems, schools and a whole list of other offices, programs that haven't any knowledge of how to help us. I have been a part of this Brain Injury Network since it has begun. Since Rebecca Quinn has been in the office I have seen this program expand enormously and hoping for it to continue for me and it's reaching onto the reservations and other American Indians that live off the reservations, including the educating of all the legal and legislative systems.

I am asking for your consideration of the greatly needed funding of this Brain Injury Network.

Sincerely,

Skipp Miller

Still alive and functional

1.14.2021



North Dakota Legislators,

My name is Carma Hanson and I am the Coordinator of Safe Kids Grand Forks, an injury prevention coalition based out of Altru Health System in Grand Forks. Our mission is to reduce the number of unintentional injuries and deaths to children under age 19 – their leading cause of death. Safe Kids Grand Forks has a coverage area that includes northeast North Dakota and northwest Minnesota and through our efforts, we partner with many agencies that conduct like-type work. Together, we have over 250 parents and colleagues that assist in our work to keep kids safe at home, at school, at play and on the way.

The North Dakota Brain Injury Network (NDBIN) is one of our partner agencies and together, we collaborate on many projects related to brain injuries. As you can imagine, brain injuries in children can occur in a number of ways, including preventable injuries such as sports concussions, falls from playground equipment or bike and car crashes. Our work as Safe Kids Grand Forks is to prevent those injuries from happening and we share that mission with the NDBIN. Once an injury has occurred, they then take over with the wonderful work that they do to assist clients with services, provide support for living with a brain injury, assist with support for the caregivers of those with brain injuries and connect the client with support and resources to help them in their recovery process.

The work that this group does is outstanding and I would encourage you to reconsider the funding allocation that has been presented in the DHS Funding Bill 1012. This proposal suggests a 50% reduction in funding for the NDBIN. While we are in a time when all funding needs to be carefully considered, I would caution that this drastic cut could have significant impacts on those suffering from brain injuries. This type of injury is complicated and careful intervention and rehabilitation is critical to those inflicted with this type of trauma. Safe Kids Grand Forks and our team have benefited greatly from the work of the NDBIN as they educate providers on concussion and brain injury management and help set protocols for coaches, teachers, athletic trainers and others involved with kids with TBI's. They also provide direct services to clients across the state as they navigate the very complicated world of living with a brain injury.

Rebecca Quinn, the Program Director for the NDBIN can speak eloquently about the services that are provided from kids – adults in their program. She has established a network of care and resources across the state that assists people of all ages, injury severities and income levels. The impact of a financial cut to the extent suggested would significantly impact their programming abilities and I would challenge you to reconsider that proposal.

I thank you for your time to read this letter of support for the North Dakota Brain Injury Network. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you have further questions that I can address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carma Hanson".

Carma Hanson, MS, RN

Coordinator – Safe Kids Grand Forks

It is great to have such a wealth of resources and your work in coordinating all of it is much appreciated!

Amy Brossart-Robinson, M.S., CCC-SLP
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders
University of North Dakota (UND)

Thank you! I also wanted to thank you for all the work you are doing across our state for those with brain injury and providers. Really helpful and impressive, thanks so much!!~ It has been crazy. We are still seeing everyone by telemedicine, which has proven quite effective. Also great to be able to address initiation, planning and really all areas of cognitive and executive functioning in patients natural environments. Anyway, we are fortunate to be able to carry one, even in this bizarre times. Have a happy and healthy Holiday!! Thanks,

Janet Grove, MS CCC-SLP, CBIS
Licensed Speech-Language Pathologist
Certified Brain Injury Specialist
Progressive Therapy Associates

During these trying COVID times of stress and negativity, the Pollyanna in me wants to spread cheer!

Thank you for all that you do to elevate the lives of those with BI. Each time I am on calls with you I am SO impressed. You show genuine compassion, insight and kindness to those you talk to. I have wondered if people treat me kindly because I'm "brain damaged", but I truly believe that you treat everyone kind because that is who you are.

Thank you,

Sandi

I continue to see how active NDBIN is in this crazy time. I keep hoping that hospital admissions will slow down but like the entire State of ND hospitals, we are overrun. I was still working last night and already know today will be no different. You continue to have great topics and meetings. I just have not been able to attend. Just wanted you to know it is not due to lack of interest or support.

Marie Brekken, PA-C
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
Sanford Health Fargo