

67th Legislative Session

House Appropriations-Human Resources Division

Chairman Nelson and other members of the Committee. I am Rebecca Quinn and serve as program director at the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The Center for Rural Health is contracted by the Department of Human Services to operate the North Dakota Brain Injury Network. My testimony today is on behalf of all the individuals and families impacted by brain injury in North Dakota.

A 2016 North Dakota Brain Injury Needs Assessment found that for people with brain injury in North Dakota, services and supports for the condition are **few, are disparate, and are disjointed**. Among the primary needs identified were a **lack of awareness, lack of training, and a lack of coordination across existing services**. The North Dakota Brain Injury Network meets these needs by providing a centralized, statewide source of information regarding brain injury and delivers resource facilitation services to individuals with brain injury. Resource facilitation for brain injury is an evidenced based service that assists individuals along the path of recovery and increasing independence. This vital service has been adopted by over 40 states and is seen as a core for state brain injury service development by the Federal TBI grant program. In order to continue to serve as the central source of information and support for brain injury in the state I ask that you please restore the funding for NDBIN.

I know there has been a lot of discussion about the future possibility of 1915i and how services can be shifted to be provided under these programs. I would like to address some concerns regarding how this would impact the services for individuals with brain injury.

First, is concerns over the **diagnosis eligibility 1915i**. In order to access the 1915i an individual must have a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual diagnosis of Neurocognitive Disorder Due to Traumatic Brain Injury. This is a psychological diagnosis, not a medical diagnosis and many individuals with brain injury do not currently receive this correct diagnosis and it is exclusive of non-traumatic injuries. This was something raised during the comment period for 1915i and DHS went above and beyond to try to find an easier solution. We were unable to find one and instead the discussion was that NDBIN could serve as a resource helping individuals understand the proper diagnosis needed and help with attaining it. A concern is that if NDBIN funding is reduced, no longer being able to serve in the role to assist with accessing 1915i for brain injury, this could mean less individuals able to receiving needed services.

A second concern is regarding the **financial eligibility** for 1915i. Majority of the individuals that NDBIN works with are not receiving Medicaid or Medicaid expansion, but are on private insurance or Medicare. For many of these individuals the very reason they utilize NDBIN is it is an opportunity to get support and understanding no matter their financial status. Many of these individuals are working, in school, lead active lives, but still need information, support, and navigation help that is not tied to Medicaid eligibility.

Third concern is regarding the **functional eligibility and service needs**. Depending on the age of the individual, financial eligibility, level of impairment, and functional need there are numerous different service options and combinations that can be tailored to meet an individual with brain injuries' needs. While 1915i may be a newly available service, it is not the only service available and, in many cases, may not be the best fit for an individual. NDBIN services to provide guidance and navigation to help access various service types, programs, services, treatments, and supports.

The final and ultimate concern is the **role of NDBIN**. Throughout the development of North Dakota's brain injury services, there has been identified the need for a centralized brain injury hub to provide information, support, and training. Over the last ten years this has been developed in NDBIN. Currently, NDBIN provides information and resource referral, informal supports, outreach, and training. All of these are indispensable services and none of them are billable under 1915i. In fact, a crucial component in 1915i being successful for individuals with brain injury is the existence of NDBIN. Training for direct care providers in understanding brain injury and how to effectively help provide the proper supports and available treatments will need to be an ongoing process. NDBIN will be able to serve to assist individuals navigate the application process and understand how to get the proper diagnosis and documentation of injury, we will be available to provide routine training for providers, but also able to provide case by case technical assistance and understanding of each individuals' unique options. And most importantly, NDBIN will continue to advocate for providers to serve individuals with brain injury. The complexity of the brain injury population means these individuals are often misunderstood, feel lost in the service system, and are often forgotten.

I am excited and hopeful about the potential 1915i holds for those with traumatic brain injury, but I am equally as excited and hopeful about the impact of the new residential habilitation services under HCBS, and the new options for tele-medicine therapy services under Medicaid. 1915i may be able meet the needs of one individual, another individual may have needs that cannot be met by it or they may not qualify. However, we would be remiss to think these services will meet the needs of individuals with brain injury without the ongoing training, guidance, and support of NDBIN.

Respectfully submitted

Rebecca Quinn  
Center for Rural Health  
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## NDBIN Activities July 2019-January 2021

- Resource Facilitation
  - Resource facilitation for brain injury is an evidenced based service that assists individuals along the path of recovery and increasing independence. This vital service has been adopted by over 40 states and is seen as a core for state brain injury service development by the Federal TBI grant program.
  - This biennium NDBIN has provided resource facilitation to a total of 266 individuals, received 92 new referrals, and had contacts with more than of 1,600 individual or family members
  - A few quotes from our satisfaction survey:
    - *Felt supported and understood.*
    - *Always prompt in answering questions and providing support and assist.*
    - *Keep on Keepin on with how you are doing your work! Thank you for all your support for those who need and are searching for others to help them in their daily lives.*
    - *I had no problem whenever I called Rebecca to ask a question. She always got back to me and either asked further questions to clarify or gave me answers to what I was seeking.*
    - *You do I & R services and help individuals get connected to a service. This is a great need.*
  
- Mind Matters Conference
  - Unfortunately, had to cancel in 2020, but plan to host a 2-day virtual event: March 25&26<sup>th</sup>
  - Past conference attendee quotes:
    - *I like having the information to share with clients that struggle with TBI*
    - *Love the Mind Matter conferences*
    - *We are fortunate to have such an important conference in ND.*
    - *Oh my-all speakers were amazing! Connecting with everyone and sharing what works-what does not.*
    - *Well organized-good job and thank you!*
    - *I thought the conference was great. I enjoyed all the speakers-nice variety and topics and good information.*
  
- Online Brain Injury Training
  - June of 2019 NDBIN launched 5 online training courses
  - Courses included:
    - Introduction to Brain Injury
    - Cognitive and Behavioral Consequences of TBI in Adults
    - Primary Care and TBI
    - Pediatric TBI
    - Substance Use and TBI
  - 1,287 individuals enrolled, 625 having completed, 412 evaluations

- Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) Training
  - Nationally recognized credential for professionals working in brain injury services. This certification is administered by the Brain Injury Association of America and involves formal coursework and a written examination.
  - NDBIN provided CBIS training in ND in July of 2019, Dec 2019, June 2020, Dec 2020
  - Total of 65 officially certified CBIS in ND as of 1/19/2021.
  - NDBIN hosts a quarterly call for all CBIS to share information and collaborate.
  
- Webinar Wednesdays
  - These FREE webinars cover a range of brain injury topics and are designed to meet the needs whether you are a brain injury/stroke survivor, caregiver, or provider. Variety of continuing education credits are offered and they are archived online.
  - Total of 26 webinars, 251 total evaluations.
  
- Virtual Support Groups
  - Facilitated 22 support groups, including 15 virtual.
  - Began partnership with University of Mary Occupational Therapy program to have students co-lead groups.
  
- Adapted the REAP for ND
  - This is an evidenced based return to learn guide developed by CO and adapted to over 20 states.
  - What is REAP?
    - R = Remove/Reduce physical and cognitive demands
    - E = Educate the student athlete families, educators, coaches, and medical teams of the potential symptoms
    - A = Adjust/Accommodate for the student athlete academically
    - P = Pace the student athlete back to learning, activity, and play
  
- Virtual Concussion Symposium
  - Hosted a Concussion Symposium with over 100 attendees
  - Keynote by the author of REAP
  
- Website
  - Maintained a comprehensive website with over 34,780 unique page views
  - Searchable online resource guide, maintained events calendar
  - Developed new content regarding caregivers, special education, and related services
  
- North Dakota Brain Injury Guide
  - Partnered with the North Dakota Stroke Association to publish a new North Dakota Brain Injury Guide for new survivors. In process of being distributed to hospitals, clinics and private providers.

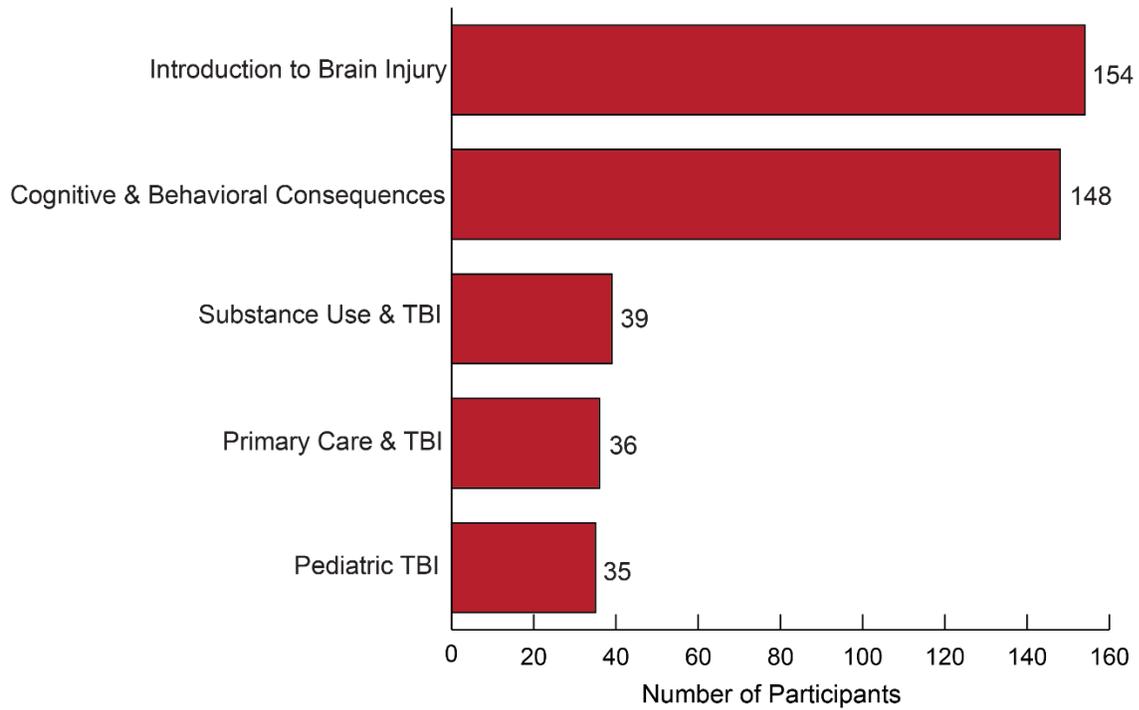
## Upcoming Programs:

- Survivor Connections
  - New program to be launched spring of 2021.
  - Phone based program for new individuals with brain injury to connect them with trained volunteers to provide support for those new to the injury.
  - So far have developed program, recruited & trained 3 survivor volunteers.
  
- Brain Injury Basics Training
  - 1st training to be held February 19th, 2021.
  - New training developed to be less intensive than the Certified Brain Injury Specialist, but more engaging than the online courses.
  - This training is based on an interactive approach and will provide direct care staff, peer support specialists and caregivers of individuals with brain injury a general knowledge of brain injury and what that means for the individuals they serve, practical techniques for handling difficult behaviors of individuals with brain injury, as well as building rapport for the individuals within their care.
  
- Book Club
  - Launched January 2021.
  - A virtual brain injury book club on the first Thursday of every month.
  
- Virtual Office Hours
  - Launching February 2021.
  - Anyone with questions or needs related to brain injury can join NDBIN for these virtual office hours.

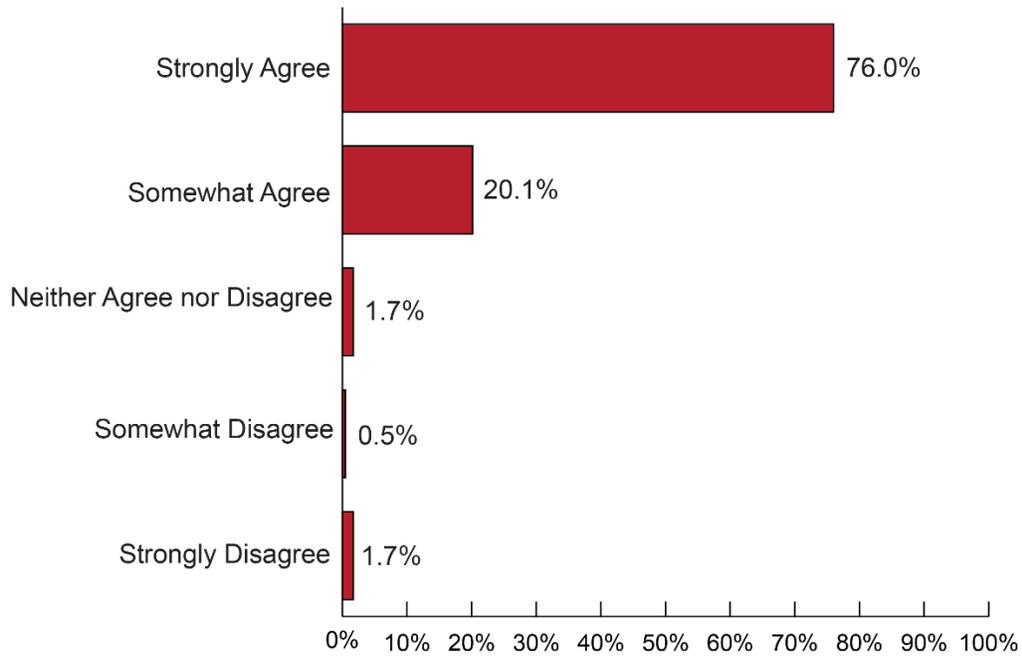
## Online Brain Injury Courses-412 total evaluations completed

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### Course Attended:

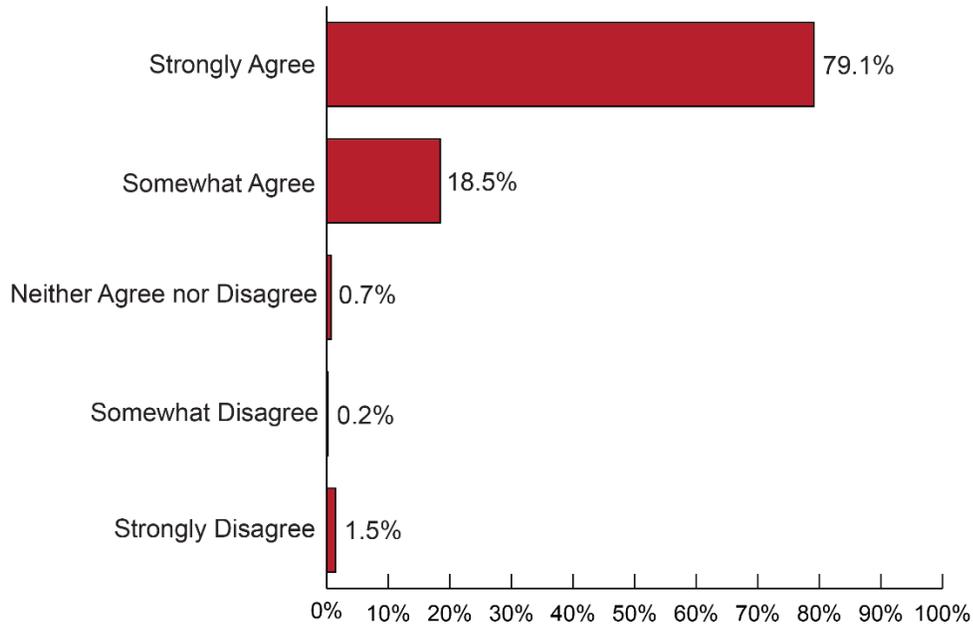


### I found the course information to be helpful:



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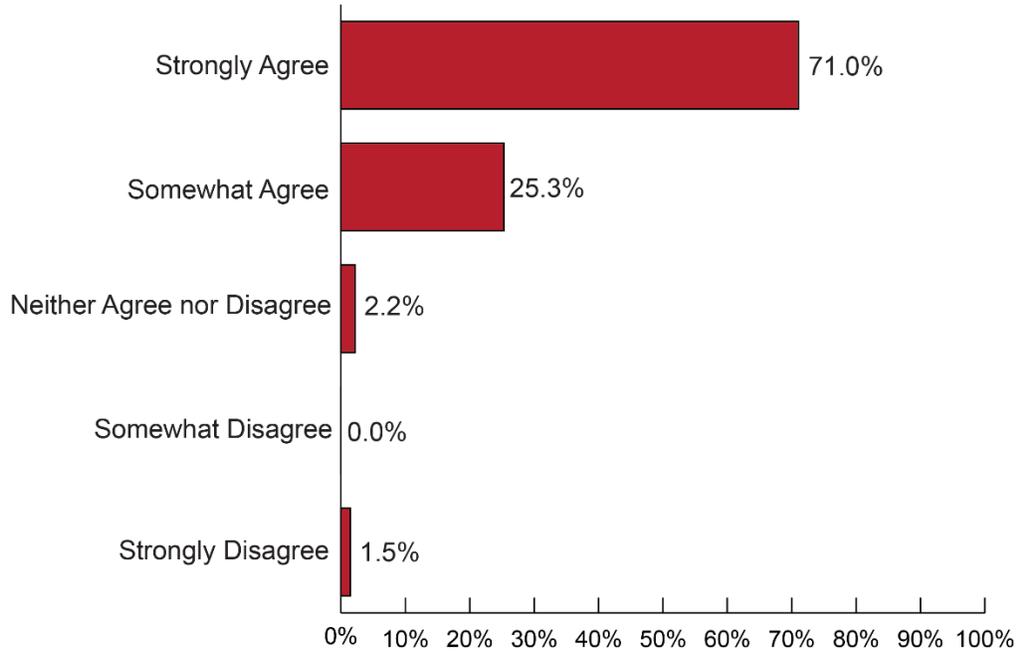
**The material presented was appropriate for the intended audience:**



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**The knowledge I gained from this course will help me serve others more effectively:**

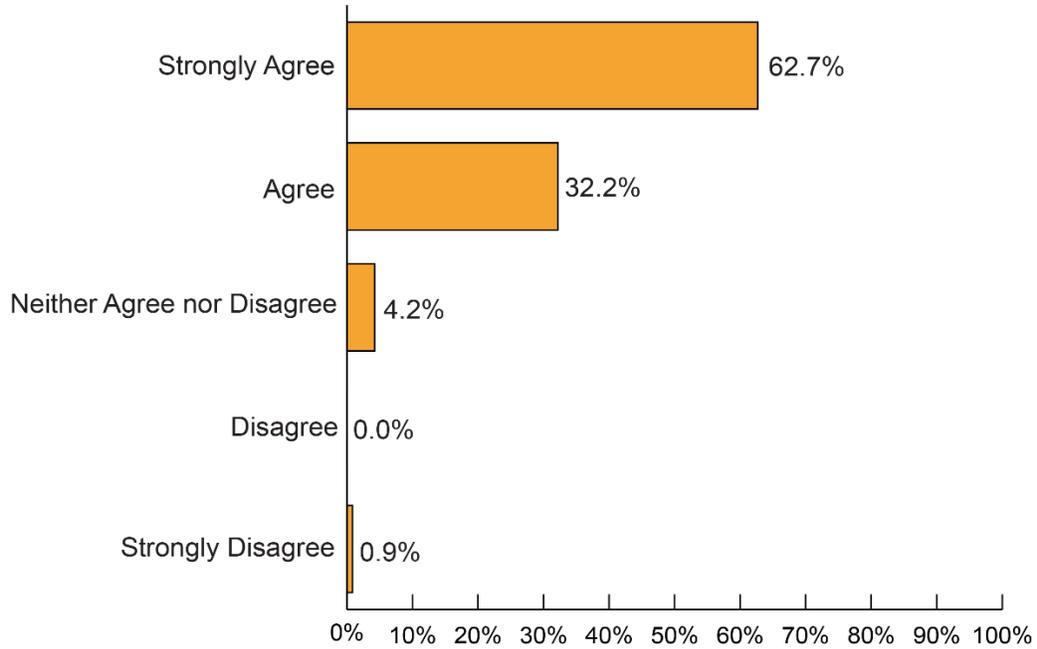
The knowledge I gained from this course will help me serve others more effectively



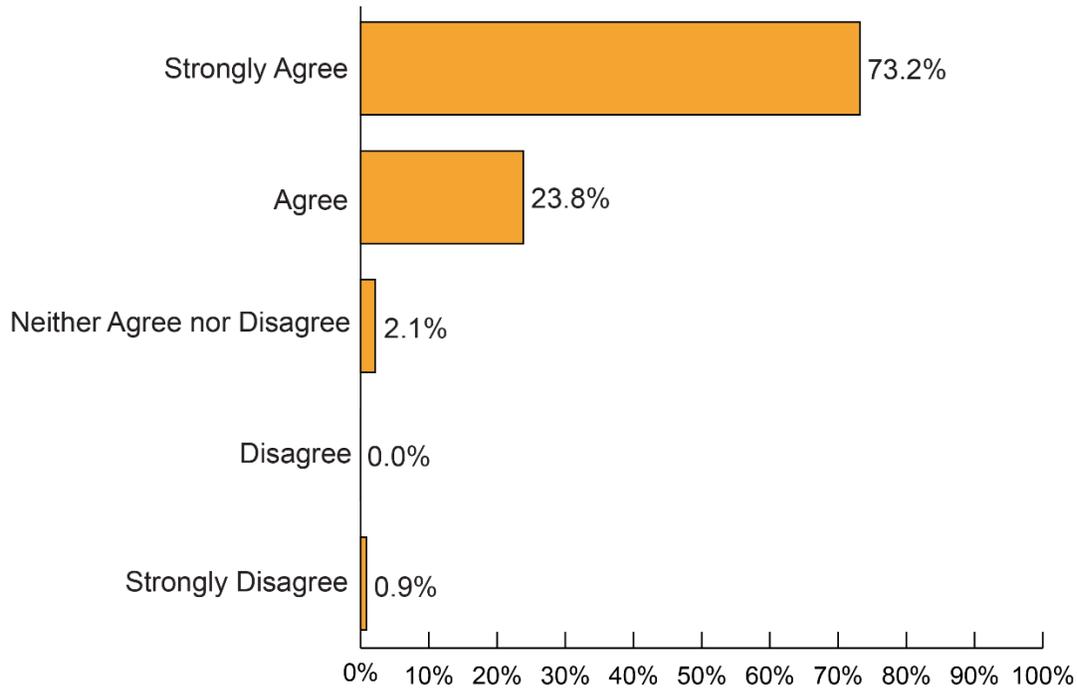
**Webinar Wednesdays-26 total webinars, there were 251 total evaluations completed**

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**The training objectives were met:**



**The trainers were knowledgeable about the topics:**



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**The training will be useful in my work:**

