

LONG TERM CARE COMMITTEE TESTIMONY**MAY 6, 2010**

Chairman Kreidt and members of the committee, I am Elaine Grasl and I am a member of District 47, Bismarck. While I volunteer for several organizations, I speak, here, for myself.

Success in the recognition, awareness, and treatment of TBI and of its symptoms are of immense interest to me. I thank you for your support. I

think I can speak for many survivors and their families that we hope for your continued support.

If you look at the person next to you, did you ever wonder how does that person think? How does that person recall things? Is it different from how I think or how I recall? Did you ever wonder why did I look right instead of left or left instead of right or look in both directions? I would guess most people don't give those things much thought--we have just a couple of other things to think about. --But there are those individuals who do give a lot of thought about how we are so individualized and yet have so much in common. Their studies and research are ever increasing--whether through neuron specific mouse studies, brain imaging, genetics studies and other studies, and with all those combined, they are making strides in the discovery--the mysteries--of brain function. They are offering suggestions

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on how to begin to treat those who have injuries and illnesses of the brain.

We can utilize this information and put some action to those suggestions to assist those in need.

TBI, traumatic brain injury, I saw on Utah State U's website, is termed a silent epidemic. It is believed that the larger amounts of concussions are not even discovered, a situation which has its own implications. TBI is not only caused by falls and accidents, it is the cause of falls and accidents. Not only that, but other problems are known to ensue after a TBI.

In brain injuries, interconnected systems are disrupted. In the Frontal Lobe, which is actually comprised of a multitude of areas, an injury can disrupt thinking skills, memory and other skills, to put it simplistically.

The brain can be mercifully forgiving--I think, especially in children, to me, perhaps because their brains are still growing. Children, who are so vulnerable, as well as others who are recovering, deserve our support and assistance. They deserve to be reached and educated about their needs as do the people who affect them--all of us--in order to stop the preventable associated problems and to help treat the original injuries.

I hope we look for means to allow and promote success, and ward off failure and do so in a timely way when it is most productive for the individual.

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If we find ways to find or create, and initiate methods to support these individuals up front, especially our children, who are so vulnerable, we can savor the possibility of saving in costs to treat job loss, depression, substance abuse and more, but most importantly, humanity--those we love.

There is more to do, much more.

Thank you. I am glad to answer any questions.

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