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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

January 30, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

We are writing to urge you to relocate the Federal Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) State Grant Program and Protection and Advocacy Systems Grant Program from the Maternal and Child Health Program of the Health Resources and Services Administration to the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

The TBI Act Reauthorization, which was signed by President Obama on November 26, 2014, authorized appropriations for these critical TBI grant programs through 2019 and empowered you, as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with discretion on where to locate the TBI grant programs. As the authors of this law and co-chairs of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, it is our intention for the TBI programs to be moved to ACL in acknowledgement of the impact of TBI across all age spans and demographics, including older adults and returning service members and veterans.

A TBI is a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. According to the CDC, 2.5 million Americans sustain a TBI in the U.S. each year. Thirty-six percent of these injuries are sustained by children age 14 and younger, while adults account for 64 percent of the annual incidence. Any TBI – whether mild, moderate, or severe – can change the way you think, act, move and feel. Some individuals require intensive treatment and long-term care while others need intermittent services and supports. Currently, more than 5 million Americans live with a TBI-related disability.

The TBI State Grant and Protection and Advocacy Grant Programs are designed to increase access to treatment and community-based services for individuals who are injured and to improve service system coordination within states and territories. Because people of all ages sustain TBIs and because the injury can negatively impact health and function across the lifespan, we believe it is the best interests of individuals and families to move the TBI State Grant and Protection and Advocacy Systems Grant Programs to ACL.

As you know, several TBI-related programs formerly housed in the U.S. Department of Education will move to ACL by July 2015 as a result of the Workforce Innovation and

Opportunity Act of 2014. These programs include: the TBI Model Systems, the Research and Training Center on TBI Community Reintegration, the Independent Living Center program, and the Assistive Technology program. Locating the TBI State Grant and Protection and Advocacy Grant Programs would only further enhance the existing collaboration and coordination among them. In addition, we believe placing the TBI State Grant and P&A Grant programs within ACL would help to:

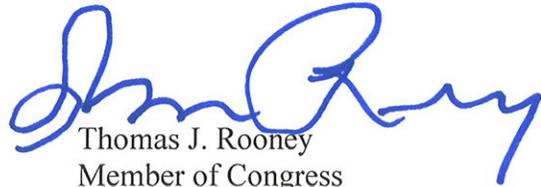
- 1) integrate TBI into the HHS community long-term services initiatives, including the single point of entry through Aging and Disability Resource Centers;
- 2) promote collaboration with Administration on Aging (AoA) on falls-related TBIs among older adults and the lifespan respite care program;
- 3) include TBI in the veterans initiatives between HHS and Department of Veterans Affairs to support Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) for veterans and returning servicemembers; and
- 4) coordinate/enhance services for individuals with TBI who may also be eligible for services provided through State Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities systems and/or could benefit from Administration on Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) initiatives to improve education, employment outcomes and self-advocacy.

We believe that realigning the TBI Grant Programs with other similar programs will help with this effort. Thank you for this consideration. We look forward to collaborating with you to further improve and enhance service delivery systems for individuals with TBI and their families.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress  
Co-Chair, Congressional Brain  
Injury Task Force



Thomas J. Rooney  
Member of Congress  
Co-Chair, Congressional Brain  
Injury Task Force