

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Deaths in Virginia, 2009

- 1,259 TBI related deaths occurred in 2009.
- 52% of TBI related deaths were unintentional, 35% were suicides, and 12% were homicides.
- The two leading causes of unintentional TBI related deaths were motor vehicle crashes (64%) and falls (28%).
- Firearms were used in 96% of TBI related suicides and 69% of TBI related homicides.
- Males were three times more likely to die from a TBI related injury than females.
- The elderly (65 and older) experienced a higher rate of TBI related deaths than any other age group.

A Virginia TBI Case:

A professional in her mid-fifties was involved in a motor vehicle crash two years ago. Initially her crash did not seem to cause any apparent physical injury; however, since then she has developed unusual behavioral symptoms including mania and paranoia. As is common among those who sustain a brain injury, she did not recognize the changes she had undergone and has been very resistant to treatment. At this time, her family has had to step in legally to protect her and plan for her proper treatment and services because her psychological situation has deteriorated so significantly.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Hospitalizations in Virginia, 2009

- 5,452 TBI related hospitalizations occurred in 2009.
- TBI related injuries resulted in hospitalization charges of more than \$241 million, with a median cost per episode of care of \$21,808.
- The average length of stay for a TBI related injury was 6 days.
- 92% of TBI hospitalizations were unintentional. The two leading causes of unintentional TBI hospitalizations were falls (59%) and motor vehicle crashes (28%).
- Males were more likely than females to be hospitalized for a TBI related injury.
- The highest rates of TBI hospitalizations occurred among infants (<1 year old) and the elderly 65 and older.

Prevention Tips Adapted from the Brain Injury Association of Virginia

Traumatic Brain Injury is a preventable public health problem in Virginia. To prevent TBIs:

- Protect your head –adults and children need to wear an appropriate helmet when riding a bike, scooter, motorcycle, or horse; playing football, ice hockey, baseball, or softball; wearing Heelys; and skating, skateboarding, skiing, or snowboarding.
- Don't drink and drive; use a designated driver.
- Wear your seat belt; make sure infant and child car seats are properly installed and used.
- Reduce the risk of falls by safety-proofing your home; safely secure windows with window guards or stops, modify slippery surfaces and remove hazards whenever possible.
- Never, ever, shake a baby.
- Store firearms unloaded and locked with a firearm safe, locked box, trigger or chamber locks.
- Know the signs and symptoms of a concussion; seek help from a health care provider if a concussion is suspected.

Resources:

- Brain Injury Association of America
www.biausa.org
- Brain Injury Association of Virginia
www.biav.net
- National Center for injury Prevention and Control (CDC): Traumatic Brain Injury
www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm
- Injury and Violence Prevention Program, Virginia Health Department
www.vahealth.org/injury

Injury and Violence Prevention Program
Virginia Department of Health
1-800-732-8333
www.vahealth.org/injury