

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

For Immediate Release:

March 19, 2009

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New resource guide offers information to survivors of traumatic brain injury

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

A new resource guide from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services offers detailed information to help those who have survived a traumatic brain injury better understand the recovery process.

The guide focuses on the medical, social and emotional needs of brain injury survivors, their family members and caregivers.

Every year, more than 14,000 Missourians are taken to an emergency room or hospital with a traumatic brain injury. The primary causes are vehicle crashes, falls, sports injuries, acts of violence and exposure to blasts during military combat.

The release of *The Missouri Greenbook: Living with Brain Injury* coincides with Brain Injury Awareness Month, observed annually in March.

"A traumatic brain injury often has a dramatic impact on the entire family as well as the survivor," said Lori Brenneke, manager of the health department's Adult Head Injury Program. "The Greenbook provides information to help survivors and their families navigate their journey to recovery."

The effects of a brain injury can range from mild to severe and can impact a person's thinking, reasoning, memory, speech, physical activity, sight, hearing, learning and other abilities. The impairments can be temporary or permanent, depending on the extent of the injury.

The state health department worked with the Missouri Head Injury Advisory Council and the Brain Injury Association of Missouri to develop the resource guide. It was written and reviewed by health-care professionals with expertise in traumatic brain injury and brain injury survivors and their family members. The publication also features advice from Missouri families who have dealt with a brain injury.

The new guide replaces one published seven years ago by the health department to provide the most up-to-date information on traumatic brain injury.

"Advancements in medical treatment and rehabilitation services are helping more people survive brain injuries and lead productive lives," Brenneke said. "We encourage brain injury survivors and their families to learn all they can about their condition, their medical treatment and the resources that are available to assist them."

The guide will be available in print to any interested individual or organization. It is recommended that hospitals and other health-care facilities make the publication available to patients and families affected by a brain injury. The guide can be viewed and ordered at www.dhss.mo.gov/SHCN/Publications. Copies will be available after April 30.

More information about traumatic brain injury in Missouri can be found on the Missouri Head Injury Advisory Council Web site at www.dhss.mo.gov/HIA-Council. For information about brain injury support groups throughout the state, contact the Brain Injury Association of Missouri at www.biamo.org or 800-377-6442.

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