**BIAMI: Who we are and what we do**

The Brain Injury Association of Michigan, BIAMI, a 501(c)(3) GuideStar Gold organization, is one of the longest established (1980), largest (nearly 800 members), and most productive of the Brain Injury Association of America’s state affiliates. Our mission is to improve the lives of those affected by brain injury and reduce the incidence and impact of brain injury through education, advocacy, support, treatment services, and research.

**More on what we do**

* Serve as a link between brain injury survivors, families, and caregivers and the nation’s most extensive network of specialized medical, psychological, rehabilitation facility, therapeutic, case management, legal, and ancillary services
* Support 20 chapters and support groups statewide
* Respond in depth to over 2000 hotline calls annually
* Aggressively advocate for policies and legislation in Lansing and nationally that support brain injury survivors
* Host active social media platforms for survivors, families, caregivers, and brain injury specialists
* Provide education and training to families and professionals, including CBIS (Certified Brain Injury Specialist) certification
* Promote brain injury prevention via public education, legislative action, and community events
* Develop and support programs assisting brain injured veterans
* Promote awareness and acceptance of brain injury through March Brain Injury Awareness Month events and activities -- such as statewide free screenings of concussion documentary “Head Games” followed by panel discussions
* Support our corporate and institutional members with major events and activities including a Legacy Gala Dinner with over 1100 attendees, East and West Golf Outings, a Lansing fundraising, and numerous others
* Provide a major regional forum for brain injury research per our 2-day Annual Conference with 1500 attendees, the nation’s premier such event
* Organize and host Spring Fling, our annual meeting for survivors and the brain injury community

**Vision**

Everyone affected by brain injury will have immediate and equal access to services and support to help lead full and meaningful lives.

**Mission**

To improve the lives of those affected by brain injury and to reduce the incidence and impact of brain injury through **education, advocacy**, **support**, **treatment services**, and **research**.

* **Education:** Our Continuing Education Series offers specific conferences, webinars, and events throughout the year that educate communities and professionals on brain injury.

**Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS)**

Michigan leads the nation in Certified Brain Injury Specialists, a certification awarded by The [Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists (ACBIS)](http://acbis.pro/) for both entry-level staff and experienced professionals working in brain injury services. ACBIS provides staff and professionals the opportunity to learn key information about brain injury, demonstrate their learning in a written examination, and earn a nationally recognized credential.

Certification is based on a comprehensive training manual covering the following topics:

* Incidence and epidemiology of brain injury
* Continuum of services
* Brain anatomy and brain-behavior relationships
* Functional impact of brain injury
* Effective treatment approaches
* Children and adolescents with brain injury
* Health and medical management
* Family issues
* Legal and ethical issues

Certification is not restricted to any one profession or discipline. Rather, it is intended for anyone who delivers services specific to brain injury survivors.

All new paid applicants receive a one-year subscription to *The Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*. This reflects a commitment to ensuring that Certified Brain Injury Specialists have access to the latest brain injury research, treatment, and practice information.   
  
**Eligibility Requirements**   
1. Applicants must have had 500 hours of currently verifiable direct contact experience with an individual or individuals with brain injury.   
2. Experience can be paid employment and/or academic internship.   
3. Experience must have included formal supervision or have been conducted while the applicant operated under a professional license.   
   – Volunteer work does not qualify.   
4. Applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent.

**Applications**

* Set up an Account with the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA)
* Complete the [BIAA User Account Set-up Form](https://docs.biausa.org/iFiller/iFiller.jsp?fref=900728e8e3856b83e69438c019d98193) and create a User ID and Password
* You will receive a confirmation e-mail with a registration number.
* SAVE this e-mail, but DO NOT use the application link provided because you will pay BIAMI directly with the demographic form
* The Brain Injury Association of Michigan (BIAMI) needs to know you wish to apply   
     – Complete the [BIAMI Demographic Form for Applicants](http://www.biami.org/Documents%20and%20Forms/BIAMI%20CBIS%20Information%20Form%202015.docx)and include the Registration Number received in the confirmation e-mail
* Mail, fax, e-mail this form with payment to BIAMI.
* BIAMI will send you a confirmation e-mail with a link to the CBIS application and a payment confirmation number to use on your actual application.
* Important Note: You have ONE year to take your exam from the date of your application. Those who do not complete the process in a timely manner must reapply and pay the fee again.

**ACBIS Training**

Official ACBIS training is provided by our Certified Brain Injury Specialist Trainers (CBIST) and is offered throughout the year. Training is not required to sit for the examination. You may complete self-study if you wish.   
  
**BIAMI's Certified Brain Injury Trainers**   
The Association is grateful to our core team of volunteer Certified Brain Injury Trainers and their organizations for their commitment to education:   
  
Cindy Barrus, PT, MM, CBIST   
Spectrum Health Rehabilitation & Nursing Center   
  
Michael O'Connor, OTR\L, CBIST   
O'Connor Occupational Therapy Services, PLLC   
  
Martin Waalkes, PhD, CBIS   
Hope Network Rehabilitation Services   
  
**Webinar Training**   
Live Webinars are scheduled in January and February. Pre-recorded webinars are available upon request to those applying through BIAMI or those who purchased the training.   
  
The *Essential Brain Injury Guide* may be ordered through the [BIAA Marketplace](https://secure.biausa.org/detail.aspx?ID=465).

**Certification Examination**

Candidates must pass the certification examination with a score of 80% or higher**.** The exam can only be taken after all forms and fees have been submitted, processed, and an approval email has been received.   
  
You must arrange your own individual proctor for the exam. If you cannot find a proctor, BIAMI will proctor individuals for a fee of $50. Please call the office to schedule your test.   
  
Notification of Exam Score: Candidates will receive immediate notification via email of their exam score upon completing the online examination.   
  
Retakes: Candidates who do not pass the examination on the first administration may take one retest within one year of the initial application date at no additional charge. An applicant who does not pass after two attempts is welcome to reapply when further prepared   
  
Renewal

In order to maintain certification, both Certified Brain Injury Specialists (CBIS) and Certified Brain Injury Specialist Trainers (CBIST) are required to pay annual renewal fees and either (1) satisfy continuing education requirements or (2) retake and pass the examination.   
  
The annual renewal requirements and instructions on how to submit your materials are listed at [www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org) and [described here](http://www.acbis.pro/renewal.html). Renewals may be handled online.

* **Advocacy:** [We work vigorously in partnership with our provider network](http://www.biami.org/advocacy) to establish, protect, and preserve the laws, policies, and systems that comprise the very foundation of Michigan’s robust network of brain injury caregivers.
  + Grassroots advocacy is an effective tool for citizens wanting to be involved in the democratic process of our government. The Brain Injury Association of Michigan monitors and maintains an active advocacy presence with state government and, in conjunction with Brain Injury Association of America, with the federal government. We promote policies and legislation that prevent brain injury and enhance the care, services, and support available to people with brain injuries and their families. In doing so, we advocate on behalf of the entire brain injury community and, not infrequently, the disability community in general. We make certain that officials in state and federal government are aware of current issues that relate to brain injury. The Association also helps people affected by brain injury learn how to advocate for needed services and support.
  + **BIAMI’s Legislative Focus: Key Issues**

**Auto No-Fault**   
One of the BIAMI’s most important advocacy issues is to maintain and preserve Michigan’s auto no-fault insurance system, signed into law by Governor William Milliken and made operational in 1973. Designated as the best in the nation by *Consumer Reports*, Michigan’s auto no-fault (ANF) system ensures that individuals injured in a motor vehicle accident, regardless of fault, will have appropriate medical and rehabilitative care as long as needed and whatever the cost. ANF is the primary reason Michigan has the nation’s largest and highest quality network of brain injury providers, and has made it possible for those catastrophically injured in vehicular accidents to achieve the highest quality of life possible while sparing their families the necessity of bankruptcy and insolvency, as well as the challenges of personally, and often permanently, caring for their loved one on a 24x7 basis.

The BIAMI provides leadership and participates in the activities of the [**Coalition Protecting Auto No-Fault (CPAN)**](http://www.cpan.us/). This coalition is comrised of over 214 individuals, consumer organizations, nonprofit organizations, advocacy organizations, and numerous health-related associations.   
  
**TBI Act Reauthorization**   
This Act became a federal law in 1996 and assists the plight of those with TBI in several ways. First, it directed the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to conduct research and registry surveillance studies. It also funds the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the National Disability Rights Network, providing them state funds (including Michigan) to address the needs of individuals and families with TBI. Please see the [**Michigan Department of Community Health’s website**](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2941_4868_42176---,00.html) for more information about Michigan related grant activities.

**Heavy Truck Opposition**

In partnership with numerous other citizen groups and non-profits, the BIAMI has advocated against allowing super-large double tandem trucks access on Michigan roads. These so-called “double 33s” not only do significantly more road damage than single trailer trucks – thus costing taxpayers more -- but their added weight and mass significantly increases braking distance and accounts for a higher accident rate than other commercial vehicles. The risk to Michigan drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and others is such that this effort merits BIAMI’s attention and advocacy.

**Michigan Brain Injury Waiver**

[**http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Brain\_Injury\_Waiver\_Application\_Final\_-\_Public\_Comment\_revised\_07-11-16\_529134\_7.pdf**](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Brain_Injury_Waiver_Application_Final_-_Public_Comment_revised_07-11-16_529134_7.pdf)

**Michigan Sports Concussion Law**

[**http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71548\_54783\_63943---,00.html**](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71548_54783_63943---,00.html)

**Distracted Driving (**link to infographic)

Recent upticks in auto accidents, injury, and death have largely been attributable to the increase in cell phone use, and especially texting. This is serious for all drivers but particularly affects teen and young adult drivers, who may already be distracted by loud music and conversation with passengers. The BIAMI has joined with other organizations in advocating for appropriate penalties to discourage distracted driving.



**Alcohol Impairment Level for Drivers**

The BIAMI is lobbying strenuously to fight attempts to raise Michigan’s blood alcohol threshold from .08 percent to .10 percent. Successful in the House of Representatives, which voted to retain the .08 level in May 2017, the Senate will take up the issue shortly. Since the federal government mandates a .08 percent level in order to receive federal highway funds, Michigan risks losing up to $50 million annually should the threshold increase to .10 percent.

Alcohol is estimated to be a factor in up to 50 percent of all TBI incidents and up to 81 percent in auto-related TBI. The BIAMI therefore believes that not penalizing higher alcohol blood levels will inevitably lead to more accidents in general and more catastrophic and fatal accidents in particular.

**Congressional Brain Injury Task Force**

The mission of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force is to further education and awareness of brain injury and support funding for basic and applied research on brain injury rehabilitation leading to development of a cure.   
  
National leaders of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force are Rep. Bill Pascrel, Jr. (D- NJ), and Rep. Thomas Rooney (R-Fl). Please consider asking your US Congressperson to join the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force.

**Contacting your Legislators**

Whether you are responding to an Action Alert or simply wish to express your concerns to your government representatives, your voice is important! Please click on the link below to help you determine who they are and provide you with the opportunity to send them an e-mail:

<http://www.biami.org/images/Logos/capwiz.jpg>

**Helpful Hints for Contacting Legislators**   
Generally, a personal letter (or e-mail) is more effective than a phone call, but a phone call can have a significant impact, especially when compared to a form letter. That’s because a staff person from the legislator's office will typically handle a phone call, record the important information, and relay the message to the legislator, whereas legislators will occasionally bring the most moving letters with them when it is time to vote on a bill. Whichever method you choose, here are some helpful hints to remember when contacting your legislators:

* **Support:** We provide critical assistance and community involvement opportunities for brain injury survivors and family members on a grassroots level through the monthly meetings of our [**20 chapters and support** groups](http://www.biami.org/sgsearch) across the state.

**Chapters and Support Groups Listing and Interactive Map** (?)

* **Treatment services:** Michigan’s brain injury rehabilitation provider network has become nationally recognized as a center of excellence in brain injury care due to the extensive number of rehabilitation facilities accredited by The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), programs, as well as professionals that specialize in brain injury care. We have worked to create a conduit of, and network between, these facilities, programs, and professionals, which serves as a core part of the BIAMI membership. We offer a [**search function**](http://www.biami.org/directorysearch) on our site that allows site visitors to search our extensive network of service providers.
* **Research:** We encourage and assist in research though [various state, regional, and clinically-oriented research projects](http://www.biami.org/research), including the Ohio Valley Brain Program under the auspices of the Ohio Valley Center for Brain Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation (<http://ohiovalley.org>).

The continuation of these programs and services depends largely on the generosity of our corporate supporters and individual donors, whose contributions enable us to fulfill our mission.

**Financial Transparency**

The Brain Injury Association of Michigan seeks to be transparent in its financial operations by making our [Annual Reports](http://www.biami.org/Annual%20Reports/BIAMI%202015%20Annual%20Report.pdf) ([view graphs here](http://www.biami.org/Annual%20Reports/BIAMI%202015%20Annual%20Report-Graphs.pdf)), IRS Form 990, and Audited Financial Statements publicly available. Our financial information is available for review on [Guidestar](http://www2.guidestar.org/ReportOrganization.aspx?ein=38-2357475).  Guidestar's mission is to revolutionize philanthropy and nonprofit practice by providing information that advances transparency, enables users to make better decisions, and encourages charitable giving. The BIAMI is a GuideStar Gold participant due to our transparency and compliance with reporting requirements.

**Key Individuals and Offices**

**Board Officers**

***Chairperson***

**Kevin Arnold**

General Manager, BPV Environmental

***Immediate Past Chairman***

**Greta Wu**

Senior Vice President of Human Services, Peckham, Inc.

***Vice Chairperson***

**Martha Nield**

Survivor family member and caregiver

***Treasurer***

**Bethany Agauas**

Consultant, UHY Advisors

**Secretary**

**Julie Gronek, MD**

Info to come

**Board Members**

**Cheryl Angelelli**

Marketing and Public Relations Director, DMC Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan

**Roderick Arnold**

Survivor, Social Worker, Detroit Public Schools

**Erica Coulston**

President and Owner, Walk the Line to SCI Recovery

**Robert Fabiano, Ph.D.**

Executive Director, PAR Rehab Services

**Tammy Hannah**

Executive Director, Origami Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center

**Jeffrey Hoover, Esq.**

Partner, Howard and Howard Law Firm

**Sherri McDaniel**

Chief Executive Officer, Sage Solutions Group

**Linda Michaels Gruber**

President and Owner, Case Management Plus

**Sheila Perlman**

Owner, Preferred Medical Transport

**Heidi Reyst, Ph.D.**

President, Sage Solutions Group

**Jack Richert**

Vice President, Special Tree Rehabilitation

**George Sinas, Esq.**

Attorney and Managing Partner, Sinas, Dramis, Brake, Boughton & McIntyre, PC

**Thomas Sinas, Esq.**

Attorney, Sinas, Dramis, Brake, Boughton & McIntyre, PC

**Phillip Weaver**

President and CEO, Hope Network

**Marty Zobrovitz**

Survivor, Volunteer

**Tim Hoste***MBIPC Representative*

Unique Options, LLC

**Staff**

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| --- | --- |
| [**Thomas J. Constand,**](mailto:tconstand@biami.org?subject=Website%20Inquiry) **BA**  *President & CEO*  (810) 229-5880 ext. 17 | **Responsibilities:**  Financial, Programs, Development, Communications, Public Policy, Human Resources, Asset Management, Partner Organizations, BIAA |
| [**Nichole Shotwell,**](mailto:nshotwell@biami.org)**MSW**  *Vice President of Programs & Operations*  (810) 229-5880 ext. 16 | **Responsibilities:**  Education Programs; I & R Services; Chapters; Individual Advocacy; Human Resources; General Operations |
| [**Gerald Schorin,**](mailto:gschorin@biami.org)**Ph. D.**  *Director of Development & Marketing* (810) 229-5880 ext. 18 | **Responsibilities:**  Developing fundraising opportunities, maintaining and growing the donor base, and advancing marketing efforts |
| [**Diane Dugan,**](mailto:ddugan@biami.org?subject=BIAMI%20Website%20Inquiry)**MS**  *Program Outreach Coordinator*  (810) 229-5880 ext. 22 | **Responsibilities:**  Agency & Veterans Outreach & Training; ACBIS; Family & Individual Support & Advocacy; Chapter Support |
| [**Kathie Sell**](mailto:ksell@biami.org?subject=BIAMI%20Website%20Inquiry)  *Information and Resources Coordinator*  (810) 229-5880 ext. 12 | **Responsibilities:**  Family, Individual & Veteran Support; Chapter Liaison; NBIIC; Chapter Liaison; Membership Support |
|  |  |
| [**Alexandra Weston,**](mailto:aweston@biami.org)**BS**  *Marketing & Communications Coordinator*  (810) 229-5880 ext. 23 | **Responsibilities:**  Event Coordination; Primary Development Support; Program Support; Communications Support; Membership; PR. |
| [**Sharon Schannault**](mailto:sschannault@biami.org?subject=BIAMI%20Website%20Inquiry)  *Office Manager & Bookkeeper*  (810) 229-5880 ext. 19 | **Responsibilities:**  Accounts Payable & Receivable; Bank Reconciliation; Financial Statements; Purchasing Authorization; IT Coordination; Database Management |
| [**Jacey VarnHagen,**](mailto:jaceyvh@biami.org)**MA**  Administrative Assistant (810) 229-5880 | **Responsibilities:**  Database Entry; Mail Processing; Program Support; Development Support; B.O.D. Support; MBIPC Support |
| [**Nathaniel Smith,**](mailto:nsmith@biami.org)**MA**  *Communications Associate*  (810) 229-5880 ext. 14 | **Responsibilities:**  Communications (Publications, Collateral Material); Web Master; Social Media Coordinator; Membership Support; IT Coordination; Database Management |