

**THI/SCI TRUST FUND
ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

February 9, 2023

Prepared By Ayanna Wilson

CALL TO ORDER

Andrew Kuyoro, the Chair of the Board, called to order the regular meeting of the Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Advisory Board at 10:15 a.m. on February 9, 2023.

IN ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Dr. Andrew Kuyoro, Sherlyn Sullivan, Melissa Bayham, Gary Matherne, Dr. Michael Chafetz, Senator Franklin Foil, Representative Lawrence A. “Larry” Bagley, Dr. Floyd “Flip” Roberts and Yvette Pacaccio, and Dr. John Fanning

Board Members Not in Attendance: Robert Chatelain, Stephanie Fletcher and Dr. Andrea Toomer

Agency Staff: Melinda Richard, Tonia Gedward, and Ayanna Wilson

Contractors in Attendance: Kimberly Hill (BIALA)

Public: None

BOARD MEETING ATTENDEES' INTRODUCTIONS

Board Members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/2023 MEETING DATES

The board reviewed the minutes from the last meeting held on August 11, 2022. The meeting minutes were approved as presented. The board reviewed the meeting dates for 2023. The dates were approved as presented.

PROGRAM UPDATES / BUDGET-FINANCIAL REPORT – SHERLYN SULLIVAN

Sherlyn asked everyone to review the financial report. She stated for the past few years we have only collected about \$1.2 million. We are still in line to receive \$1.2 million (estimated revenue) this year as well. She added in the past it has been a problem because our expenses are \$1.8 million (exceeds revenue) which means we are short. She reminded everyone that we are funded for this year because Senator Price lobbied for us to receive additional funding (\$800,000) in fiscal year 23 to cover the shortfall and open new cases. Sherlyn stated she’s currently working to make the additional funding a permanent source. She added that the Revenue Estimating Committee (REC) met in January and has approved a means of financing swap from statutory dedications to state general funds because we aren’t able to collect the \$1.8M budget. As of today, we will receive \$619,000 for fiscal year 24. We already have \$106,000 which puts us

close to \$800,000. She stated we feel pretty comfortable with continuing to open cases as long as the legislature approves the \$619,000 during session and that we should be good for next year as well. She asked if anyone had any questions. Senator Bagley indicated that they are working on the collection of funds (from the municipalities). He stated we should see a difference in 2 years. He asked that the program let him know how it is going with the collections of the municipalities in his district. Sherlyn stated we would let him know.

Tonia stated that she had a staff member (Debra Lang) call each municipality to complete a survey. During the survey, several of the municipalities indicated that they did not know the program even existed. She added that this may not be true because another staff member, Nikki, did the same type of review a few years ago and they said the same thing at that time. Senator Bagley stated it (the requirement to pay fees) is law, they should know. Sherlyn stated we have done a lot of outreach, but we cannot force them (to pay) and we do not have a way to audit them. She added we have to accept what they give us. Tonia stated when we (the program) made the phone calls, we saw a slight increase but it decreased shortly after. She indicated that there was no consistency. Kimberly (BIALA) asked if it's law why can't it be enforced? Tonia stated that it cannot be enforced because the information is self-reported. Sherlyn said that we send letters from the department's legal representatives but there's still no way to enforce it.

PROGRAM STATUS – TONIA GEDWARD

Tonia began with the program's funding updates. She stated in addition to bridging the gap in current expenditures, the additional funding enabled the program to add 45 new participants from the list of 2018 waitlist applicants. She stated that we are currently in the process of reviewing 98 waitlist applicants from 2019. She added, so far we've made a final eligibility determination on 64 participants. Of the 64 participants, 43 are now eligible to receive services. We are waiting on additional information from the other applicants. Once we've completed the review of all 2019 applicants, we will explore reviewing 2020 waitlist applications. She stated there are 63 applicants on the waitlist for 2020.

She stated that as of 2/9/23, there are 237 applicants on the waitlist, which is 103 less than the amount reported during the last board meeting. Tonia stated we've added 33 new applicants to the waitlist since the last board meeting.

<u>Application Year</u>	<u>Number of Appl.</u>	<u>Notes</u>
2019	34	(Pending/Remaining Eligibility Determinations)
2020	63	
2021	60	
2022	72	(25 added since the last meeting)
2023	8	(8 added since the last meeting)

Tonia informed the board that Ms. Debra Lang, who was hired to assist with tracking municipality payments, completed the municipality survey calls. She stated that Ms. Debra emailed or mailed the Municipality Collections Reporting form and information about the program to the municipalities who requested it. She stated that Ms. Debra is currently in the process of reviewing and comparing their responses to the survey to the actual fees we receive each month to make sure they somewhat correspond.

Tonia stated LMA’s Municipality Mid-Winter Conference was held from 2/7 to 2/8. They included information about the program (a one-pager) in the information packet that was distributed at the conference.

She stated as of today, the program has 555 eligible participants. Since the last board meeting, the program processed numerous participant requests.

<u>Request Type</u>	<u>As of Today</u>	<u>Reported Last Meeting (6 months ago)</u>
New Application Reviews	43 (33 added to the waitlist)	22
Initial Assessment Reviews	169 (2018 and 2019)	0
Participant Services Plans	198 (189 approved)	94
Purchase Authorizations	189	89
Annual Assessment	214	106
Payments	415	183
Caseload Change Requests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Closure (44) • Transfer to another region (10) • Updated participant’s information (3) • Reinstated participant’s case (4) • Requests to mail a new application (27) <i>Note: The program mailed the requested applications directly to the individuals.</i>	88	55

Tonia stated she is in the process of updating the Participant Eligibility letter to include covered services information. She believes that including information about covered services will not only help to better inform the participants but may even encourage them to request goods and services. She added, as of now, we leave it to the support coordinator to provide this information. Most often, the support coordinators, especially the waiver support coordinators, aren’t familiar with what the program offers. Although we provide frequent training, the high turnover rate within the SC Agencies makes it a little difficult. She stated the good news is, a copy of the eligibility letter is included in the approval packet sent to the support coordinator as well so this will help them too.

Tonia stated during the next few weeks, we will be mailing a Support Coordination Agency notification letter and program FACT sheet to current participants who have not used their funds in two or more years. The mail-outs will include contact information about their current SC Agency and information about what types of services the program offers.

BIALA – KIMBERLY HILL

Kimberly stated our helpline has remained consistent receiving on average 28 calls per month. Their website continues to be beneficial with an average of 1,527 page views per month.

She stated their monthly virtual peer group calls continue with case managers continuing to join rehab hospitals with their patients to participate in their calls. The attendance has increased over the past few months including rehab directors joining to learn about valuable resources and support for patients. In-person in-services have been minimal but contact with case managers and rehab directors remains consistent each month. They also participated in four of the OAAS resource fairs in November and December sharing numerous trust fund applications, making great connections, providing outreach, and sharing resources.

Kimberly stated as mentioned in the last report, their organization was awarded a large, two-year grant allowing them to create a Statewide Ambassador Program to assist them in broadening their outreach and ensuring that they connect individuals impacted by traumatic brain and/or spinal cord injuries to pertinent resources, peer support, successful programs and services, and social opportunities in their communities, thus improving the quality of their lives. To date, all deliverables have been met and/or exceeded. They are already seeing the benefits of this program as evidenced by their membership numbers increasing by 10%. Additionally, they have been fielding phone calls/emails from new hospital contacts around the state and seeing new people participate in virtual peer calls and recreational opportunities offered.

She added 250 resource backpacks filled with valuable resources have been distributed to rehabilitation and acute hospitals around the state. She stated a special thank you goes to Gary Matherne, Trust Fund Advisory Board Member, who contributed a generous donation to their program which allowed additional backpacks to be made available. In May, they will submit a proposal for their program to receive another round of funding.

Kimberly stated in January 2023, BIALA partnered with another non-profit organization and offered a silent dance party event for individuals with sensory sensitivities, brain and/or spinal cord injuries and mobility impairments. It was a great success which they plan to emulate in north Louisiana this summer. Another event is being planned in the Baton Rouge area in conjunction with a brain and spinal cord injury support group.

She stated their partnership with Tulane University's Center for Public Service continues where they are working with professors and students to grow awareness about brain and spinal cord injuries. They have been guest speakers to classes and are working on a semester-long project with one of the classes.

Lastly, Kim stated their annual conference is March 24-25 in Kenner, LA. Their exhibit hall, which will be filled with resources for professionals and those impacted by brain and/or spinal cord injuries, will have the most exhibitors they have ever had. She added these resources include services, products, organizations, etc. from around the state and neighboring states that will provide valuable information to all attendees. Their schedule of events is also the largest offering they have ever had and includes a networking social and survivor day.

She stated on behalf of the board of directors and staff of BIALA, they thank you for your continued support. Because of your support, they will continue their mission to be the statewide resource for people impacted by brain and/or spinal cord injury.

Tonia stated she sent information about the conference to the board members. She stated it is really informational, fun, and interesting. She asked that if you have time to please attend.

OTHER BUSINESS

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

FUTURE MEETINGS

The next board meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., at The Bienville Building 628 North Fourth St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802 in Room 173.

2023 THSCI ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS:

February 9, 2023 – Room 117

May 11, 2023 – Room 173

August 10, 2023 – Room 173

November 9, 2023 – Room 671

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.