

Texas Brain Injury Resource Guide

There are many services available to assist people living with a brain injury. Use this guide to find the support you need.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Office of Acquired Brain Injury

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services Program

Office of Disability Prevention for Children

Contents

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| What is a Brain Injury? | 1 |
| Types of Brain Injury | 1 |
| How Common Are Brain Injuries?..... | 2 |
| Signs and Symptoms of Brain Injury | 2 |
| Life After Brain Injury | 3 |
| 2-1-1 Texas..... | 3 |
| The Office of Acquired Brain Injury..... | 3 |
| Navigate Life Texas..... | 3 |
| Online Resources | 4 |
| General Brain Injury Resources | 4 |
| Help for Veterans..... | 4 |
| Resources for Kids and Parents..... | 5 |
| Healthcare Benefits | 6 |
| Medicaid and Other Benefits | 6 |
| Local Community Health Clinics | 6 |
| Prescription Assistance | 6 |
| Rehabilitation Services | 7 |
| Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services | 7 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | 7 |
| Locating Providers..... | 7 |
| Mental Health and Substance Use | 8 |
| 2-1-1 Texas..... | 8 |
| Mental Health Texas..... | 8 |
| Local Mental Health Authorities..... | 8 |
| Outreach, Screening, Assessment and Referral Centers | 8 |
| Suicide Crisis Line | 8 |
| Psychology Today..... | 8 |
| Financial Help | 9 |
| 2-1-1 Texas..... | 9 |
| Social Security | 9 |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Crime Victims' Compensation | 9 |
| Workers' Compensation..... | 10 |
| Other | 10 |
| Long-Term Services and Supports | 11 |
| 2-1-1 Texas..... | 11 |
| Aging and Disability Resource Centers..... | 11 |
| Area Agencies on Aging..... | 11 |
| Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority..... | 11 |
| Waiver Programs and Entitlements | 11 |
| Long-Term Care Facilities | 12 |
| Respite Care..... | 12 |
| Palliative Care..... | 12 |
| Independence Services | 13 |
| 2-1-1 Texas..... | 13 |
| Independent Living Services | 13 |
| Medical Equipment and Supplies | 13 |
| Home Modifications..... | 14 |
| Housing..... | 14 |
| Transportation | 14 |
| Issues with Services | 15 |
| Office of the Ombudsman..... | 15 |
| Insurance Issues | 15 |
| Index | 16 |
| Definitions..... | 16 |
| What are DADS and DARS? | 16 |

What is a Brain Injury?

Acquired brain injury is any injury to the brain caused by events after birth, rather than as part of a genetic or congenital disorder. This includes strokes, brain illness and other brain injuries. They are not what are called degenerative brain conditions, such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

Some of the effects that a brain injury can have include:

- **Cognitive effects**, which include memory problems, difficulty concentrating, poor planning and judgment skills, language difficulties, and a lack of problem solving skills
- **Sensory effects**, such as altered visual/spatial perception, sense of touch and hearing, or vision impairments
- **Emotional effects**, including being impulsive, risky behavior, depression/anxiety, aggression or paranoia
- **Physical effects**, including severe headaches, seizures, poor coordination and balance, slurred speech, and being unable to move

We like to think of acquired brain injury as the umbrella term that all other brain injuries fit under. There are 2 main sub-categories that fit under the term acquired brain injury. All types of brain injury are serious and can be life altering. Recovery can often look identical between different types of brain injury. The real differentiation is in how the brain injury occurs.

Types of Brain Injury

Traumatic brain injury is a type of acquired brain injury. TBIs are caused by an external force that disrupts the normal function of the brain, such as a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury.

Common causes include:

- Falls from heights as well as slips, tumbles down steps, losing balance
- Being struck by/against something such as falling debris, being hit by a car, violence
- Motor vehicle crashes, including motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles
- Violence, such as domestic or gang violence, assault or shaken baby syndrome

Non-traumatic brain injury, all other types of acquired brain injuries, are injuries caused by an internal event, rather than an external force

Common causes include:

- Stroke
- Infections, such as meningitis or encephalitis
- No oxygen or too little oxygen making it to the brain from causes such as near drowning, strangulation or aspiration
- Brain tumors
- Exposure to toxins in cleaning products, pesticides, lead or mercury
- Drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamines, or opioids

How Common Are Brain Injuries?

Brain injury is one of the most commonly occurring, yet least talked about, public health issues in Texas. Survivors and their families often struggle with the cognitive, behavioral and physical consequences of their injuries.

Brain injury results in financial burden to the state. Because disabilities resulting from brain injury often are not readily apparent, brain injury is referred to as an invisible condition.



Signs and Symptoms of Brain Injury

It's easy to miss the signs of a brain injury. People can often "look normal" or "feel fine." If someone's head or body has been hit or jolted, call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room if they experience:

- Confusion or disorientation
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Blood or clear fluid coming from nose or ears
- Weakness, numbness or tingling in limbs
- Trouble walking
- Slurred speech or vision issues
- Seizure

Sometimes, symptoms may not appear until days, weeks or months after the injury. Keep watching for signs and symptoms, even if you don't see any immediately. See a doctor if you notice any of these changes:

- Concentration and memory problems
- Changes in work/school performance
- Delayed thinking and understanding
- Poor balance and coordination
- Sleep disturbances or fatigue
- Ongoing headaches or neck pain
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Changes in personality and behavior
- Irritability/Aggression
- Depression/Anxiety

Life After Brain Injury

Figuring out what to do first, which services someone needs or where to find those services can be both confusing and overwhelming. Several resources can make this process easier.

2-1-1 Texas

2-1-1 Texas helps people connect with the services they need. By phone or online, they have accurate, well-organized and easy-to-find information from state and local health and human services programs. 2-1-1 Texas is free, anonymous and available 24/7. Whether you need help finding food, housing, child care, crisis counseling or substance use treatment, all you need is one number: 2-1-1 (877-541-7905). You can also search for services online at 211texas.org/.



The Office of Acquired Brain Injury

The Texas Health and Human Services Office of Acquired Brain Injury is Texas' premier resource for education, awareness, prevention information and service referral with regard to brain injury. OABI helps ensure people with a brain injury and their families find the resources they need. The OABI team provides personal attention to help you navigate the maze of services and supports in Texas, and to connect you with the resources you need. Contact OABI at oabi@hhsc.state.tx.us.

The OABI website, hhs.texas.gov/brain-injury, contains information for brain injury survivors, family members, caregivers and other professionals. You will find several tools on the OABI website:

- **Navigating the Brain Maze Video Series:** Learn what a brain injury is, levels of care and recovery, funding and insurance, as well as specific information on stroke, brain injury in children and mild traumatic brain injury. Hear from doctors, professionals, people with a brain injury and their families about how you can navigate your way through the maze that brain injury can often be.
- **Brain Injury Support Groups:** Find a safe gathering space to share stories, have fun and guide each other through difficult times. Many support groups host social events and guest speakers and are led by people with vast knowledge of brain injury. Get support, tips, information and local resources, such as respite care, social outlets, specialized medical care and vocational opportunities.

Navigate Life Texas

It can be confusing to figure out the best way to support a child with intellectual and developmental disabilities, but many organizations and state programs can help you. Navigate Life Texas is a great place to learn more about everything from diagnosis to transitioning to adulthood. In addition to housing a wealth of information and videos, Navigate Life Texas also has a database of organizations that help parents find the resources and services needed to support children with IDD. Visit navigatelifetexas.org.



Online Resources

- **Brainline** is a website with lots of information about brain injury. Brainline.org offers information for caregivers, professionals and veterans. They also have real stories and a resource directory.
- **Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center** works closely with researchers to develop resources for people living with brain injuries and their caregivers. These materials are available in a variety of formats at msktc.org/tbi.
- **American Stroke Association** is a great resource for information about preventing stroke, stroke warning signs and resources for people who have had a stroke and their caregivers. Learn more at strokeassociation.org.



General Brain Injury Resources

- **Texas Brain Injury Alliance** is a Texas-wide community of people with brain injuries, their families, friends and dedicated professionals. TexasBIA strives to provide family guidance, to support research and rehabilitation and to develop programs for public awareness and education. To learn more, visit texasbia.org.
- **Brain Injury Association of America - Texas Division** strives to advance awareness, research, treatment and education in efforts to improve the quality of life for all people affected by brain injury. Learn more at biausa.org/find-bia/texas.
- **Hope After Brain Injury** offers adult survivors of brain injury and their caregivers the hope of continued recovery through the provision of outpatient counseling, education and connection to community resources. Learn more at hopeafterbraininjury.org.
- **BIND**, the Brain Injury Network of Dallas, is a non-profit group providing support to adults with brain injury so they can reconnect with their community and workplace. BIND follows a clubhouse model for rehabilitation and is the only program of its kind in Texas. To learn more, visit thebind.org.



Help for Veterans

- **Texas Veterans Commission** provides disabled U.S. veterans residing in Texas with a variety of support services, including disability grants if you lost mobility during service or VA-provided medical attention. Learn more at tvc.state.tx.us or by calling 512-463-5538 or 800-252-8387.
- **The Texas Veterans Portal** connects veterans, their families and caregivers to the benefits and services earned through their military service. Women and men who served in any branch of the United States Armed Forces, including Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, Reserves or National Guard, may be eligible for additional benefits and services. For more information, please visit the Texas Veterans Portal at veterans.portal.texas.gov.
- **Veterans Crisis Line** is available to help Veterans who may be thinking about suicide. For help, call 800-273-8255 and press 1.




Resources for Kids and Parents

- **The Children’s Hemiplegia and Stroke Association** helps children who have survived an early brain injury that causes weakness on one side of the body. They maintain a website with information to help parents care for their children. CHASA also helps families find support in their community and connect to other parents who have a child with the same condition.



- **Team Luke Hope for Minds** is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of children with a brain injury and providing hope for their families through support and education. Families who qualify can receive financial help for items such as therapies, treatments and equipment. Families can receive up to \$5,000 each year with a lifetime cap of \$15,000. For those who don't qualify, the organization provides up to \$2,000/lifetime. Team Luke Hope for Minds serves children 18 and younger. Call 512-845-1466 or visit www.teamlukehopeforminds.org to learn more.



 **Brain Injury and Your Child**, is a resource guide created by Team Luke Hope for Minds for parents and caregivers of children with brain injuries. Contact Team Luke Hope for Minds to request a copy.

- **Texas Parent 2 Parent** is committed to improving the lives of children who have disabilities, chronic illness or special health care needs. TxP2P empowers families to be strong advocates through parent-to-parent support, resource referral and education. In addition, TxP2P educates professionals about the unique needs of children with IDD. Learn more at txp2p.org or by calling 512-458-8600 (Toll free: 866-896-6001).
- **Children with Special Health Care Needs Services Program** helps children with their medical care, mental health care, special therapies and much more. Call 800-252-8023 or email cshcn@hhsc.state.tx.us to learn more.
- **Early Childhood Intervention** helps families with children birth to 36 months, with developmental delays, disabilities or certain medical conditions. Find information on developmental milestones, and learn how to make a referral on their website, with or without a doctor's recommendation. Learn more at hhs.texas.gov/eci or call the HHS Office of the Ombudsman at 877-787-8999, select a language, then select Option 3.
- **Texas Education Agency** is the state agency that oversees primary and secondary public education. Contact your regional Education Service Center for technical assistance, information about special education practices, specific topic information, training opportunities, location or identification of special education resources. Find your local ESC at https://tea.texas.gov/regional_services/esc/.



Healthcare Benefits

Medicaid and Other Benefits

You may qualify for benefits such as Medicaid, STAR+PLUS, Medicaid Buy-In for Adults and STAR Kids. The particular program you qualify for is dependent on your income, your disability status and your age. Learn more at yourtexasbenefits.com or call 2-1-1.



Applying for Medicaid

Remember that for many of the programs available in Texas, you have to first apply and be accepted into Medicaid.

- Apply online for Medicaid at yourtexasbenefits.com.
- Apply over the phone by calling 2-1-1 (877-541-7905). Press option 1 twice to connect with a representative.
- Use the "Find Office" search engine on Your Texas Benefits to locate the nearest HHS benefit office.

Helpful Tip

Once you are enrolled in Medicaid, know how to contact your service coordinator or case manager. This person is the go-to person to get into any waivers or entitlement programs. They coordinate all the services you receive through your selected managed care organization. Many people don't know they have a service coordinator. Call your MCO to find out who it is, or request to be assigned one.

Local Community Health Clinics

If you don't have health coverage of any kind, you can search for a Community Health Center on the Texas Association of Community Health Centers website, <https://www.tachc.org/find-healthcare-center>. Community Health Centers provide services for the uninsured and underinsured.

Prescription Assistance

- **2-1-1 Texas** has a comprehensive list of local programs at <http://www.211texas.org/guided-search/>. Look under the section "Health/Medical," then under "Medical Expense Assistance" and search by location and type. You can also call 2-1-1 (877-541-7905), press option 1.
- **Medicare.gov** has a list of pharmaceutical companies that offer assistance programs for the drugs those companies manufacture. Check for available programs and information on how to apply at medicare.gov/pharmaceutical-assistance-program.
- **The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities** keeps a list of programs and resources for prescription assistance provided by the CTD. Visit txdisabilities.org/prescription-assistance to learn more.

Rehabilitation Services

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services

The Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services program serves people who have experienced traumatic brain injuries, traumatic spinal cord injuries or both. CRS is a funding source that can help alleviate the financial stress that brain injury and spinal cord injury can bring on. The program helps people with TBIs or SCIs receive services to function more independently in the home and community. Counselors and family members work collaboratively with the person with a TBI or SCI to identify rehabilitation goals and determine what services can support increased independence.

Services may include:

- Inpatient comprehensive rehabilitation services
- Outpatient rehabilitation services
- Post-acute brain injury services
- Additional services called “ancillary services”

To learn more or to apply, visit <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/comprehensive-rehabilitation-services>. To contact CRS, email CRS_Program@hhsc.state.tx.us, call 2-1-1, or call the HHS Office of the Ombudsman at 877-787-8999, select a language, and then select Option 3.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation at the Texas Workforce Commission helps people with physical or mental disabilities prepare for, obtain, retain or advance in employment, including coordinating brain injury rehabilitation services. They facilitate communication and understanding with employers regarding accommodations and work to find employment that meet the needs and skill sets of that person.

Returning to work is in and of itself a means of cognitive and physical rehabilitation.

Learn more at twc.state.tx.us/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services or call 800-628-5115.



Locating Providers

Locating a provider who specializes in working with people with a brain injury isn't always easy, but there are some tools that can help you find providers in your area.

- **CRS, VR and other program providers** are all over the state and can help you find providers in your area. See the sections above or call 2-1-1 to find a CRS, VR or program office near you.
- **Call your health coverage provider.** Insurance companies and managed care organizations keep lists of their providers and can assist you in finding a particular provider in your area.
- **Texas Medicaid & Healthcare Partnership**, tmhp.com, has a Medicaid Provider Lookup to help you locate Medicaid providers in your area.

If you are still unable to find a provider in your area, contact the Office of Acquired Brain Injury for help.

Mental Health and Substance Use

2-1-1 Texas

2-1-1 Texas lists mental health resources at <http://www.211texas.org/guided-search/>. The Guided Search for Mental Health includes crisis and counseling hotlines, evaluation and counseling, mental health education, mental health services, and support groups. You can also call 2-1-1 (877-541-7905) to connect with mental health and substance use services in your area.

Mental Health Texas

Mental Health Texas, mentalhealthtx.org, has information on how to find mental health and substance use services in Texas. The website includes a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration service locator, also available at findtreatment.samhsa.gov, to help you find substance use and/or mental health treatment facilities.



Local Mental Health Authorities

Community mental health centers, also referred to as local mental health authorities provide mental health services in communities across Texas. To find your LMHA, use 2-1-1 Texas or visit <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use> or <http://txcouncil.com/about-community-centers/>. Each LMHA also has a 24/7 crisis line.

Outreach, Screening, Assessment and Referral Centers

Outreach, screening, assessment and referral centers may be the first point of contact for those seeking substance use disorder treatment services. Regardless of ability to pay, Texas residents who are seeking substance use disorder services and information may qualify for services based on need. Locate and contact your local OSAR at hhs.texas.gov/OSAR or call 2-1-1 Texas (877-541-7905) for assistance.

Suicide Crisis Line

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**, 800-273-TALK (8255), to be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area.

Psychology Today

Psychology Today has a search engine to find therapists in your area. You can filter by specialty, such as experience with brain injury, and find details about billing. Visit <https://www.psychologytoday.com/> to search in your community.

Financial Help

2-1-1 Texas

2-1-1 Texas can help you find benefit information and financial assistance. Call 2-1-1 (877-541-7905) or search for services online at 211texas.org/.

Social Security

Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool

The Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool helps you determine whether or not you qualify for benefits that Social Security administers. Based on your answers to questions, this tool will list benefits for which you might be eligible and provides you with information about how to qualify and apply. Visit BEST at ssabest.benefits.gov.

Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Income

The Social Security Administration has two benefit programs that can help with medical needs.

Supplemental Security Income is a federal program managed by the Social Security Administration that offers monthly cash assistance to help pay for personal and medical needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, and medical and dental care not covered under health insurance. You must apply and be approved for SSI based on your family income.



Social Security Disability Insurance is a federal benefits program managed by the Social Security Administration that offers monthly payments to people who have disabilities or special healthcare needs.

Applying

Apply for disability benefits as soon as you become disabled. If you are ready to apply now:

- Complete your application online at ssa.gov/applyfordisability.
- Call the toll-free telephone number, at 800-772-1213, TTY 800-325-0778.
- Call or visit your local Social Security office, listed at ssa.gov/locator.

Crime Victims' Compensation

If your brain injury was the result of a crime you experienced, you may be eligible for benefits. You can apply for compensation for expenses related to the crime, such as medical costs, counseling, home or car modifications, and more. If you are a victim of violent crime in Texas, report the crime to the local law enforcement agency and ask for information about the Crime Victims' Compensation program. Most police and sheriff's departments will have a crime victim liaison who can explain the program, provide you with an application and help you fill it out. You can get an application directly from Office of the Attorney General by calling 800-983-9933 or emailing crimevictims@texasattorneygeneral.gov. Learn more at <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/crime-victims-compensation>.

Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation is a state-regulated insurance program that provides covered employees with income and medical benefits if they sustain a work-related injury or illness. Texas private employers can choose whether or not to provide workers' compensation insurance coverage for their employees. If offered, workers' compensation pays your medical bills and replaces a portion of your lost wages if you are injured at work or have a work-related illness.

To learn more about workers' compensation resources, visit <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/employee/>. For assistance with a workers' compensation claim, please contact Claims and Customer Services at 800-252-7031, option 1.

Helpful Tip

You must report your injury to your employer within 30 days from the date of the injury, or from the date you knew your injury or illness was related to your job. If you don't, your right to obtain benefits could be lost. To get the answers to more frequently asked questions, visit, http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/employee/workerresources_english.html#q1.

Other

Second Chance Foundation

The Second Chance Foundation provides need-based financial assistance to people who have a disability and require rehabilitation. Those who receive support from Second Chance have either exhausted, or do not have, any other financial options for their specific needs. The Foundation directly purchases or provides funds for purchases such as equipment, extended outpatient therapy or continuing education that will help a disabled person achieve a better quality of life. Learn more at secondchanceama.org. You can contact Second Chance Foundation at 806-212-7645.

Crowdsourcing

Some people and their families use crowdsourcing websites to raise money to cover the extra expenses that insurance may not cover. With a well-crafted fundraising page, you might receive donations from friends, family, neighbors and anonymous donors. There is no guarantee, and it does take a little work, but it might be worth a try. Some popular crowdsourcing sites include gofundme.com, youcaring.com and crowdrise.com.

Long-Term Services and Supports

2-1-1 Texas

2-1-1 Texas provides information on services available in Texas, including long-term care services and supports. Call 2-1-1 or search for services online at www.211texas.org/.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers

It can be confusing to find help for older adults and people with disabilities. Aging and disability resource centers provide information on and access to long-term services care programs with person-centered specialized information, referrals and other assistance. ADRCs help cut through the confusing maze of funding sources, multiple intake systems and eligibility processes. To contact your local ADRC, call 855-937-2372 (855-YES-ADRC) or visit <https://www.dads.state.tx.us/contact/search.cfm>.

Area Agencies on Aging

Area agencies on aging provide services to help people age 60 and older, their family members and caregivers get information and assistance in locating and accessing community services. Services include benefits counseling, care coordination, legal assistance, caregiver support services, in-home support services, and more. You can contact your local AAA by phone at 800-252-9240. To find your local AAA, visit <https://www.dads.state.tx.us/contact/search.cfm>.

Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority

Local intellectual and developmental disability authorities help people apply for and coordinate publicly-funded IDD services. LIDDAs provide an array of services and supports for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and are responsible for enrolling eligible people into intermediate care facilities for people with IDD including state supported living centers, Home and Community-based Services, and Texas Home Living.

LIDDAs are also responsible for Permanency Planning for consumers under 22 years of age who live in an ICF/IID, state supported living center or a residential setting of the HCS Program. You can find the contact information for your local LIDDA by visiting <https://www.dads.state.tx.us/contact/search.cfm>.

Waiver Programs and Entitlements

Waiver programs provide services Medicaid doesn't typically cover. These waivers provide long-term home and community-based services for people with disabilities or special health-care needs to help them live in the community. A person in a waiver program also receives full Medicaid health-care benefits.

- **STAR+PLUS Waiver Program** can provide a person with the care they need to live in their home. The STAR+PLUS Waiver Program isn't the same as Star-Plus Medicaid. It's a waiver that complements the program.

- **Community First Choice** provides many of the same services as the waivers, but allows you to bypass the lengthy waitlist of other waivers.
- There are **other waiver programs** in Texas; however, brain injury survivors may not always qualify, based upon their age at the time of injury. HHS has put together several comparison charts that can help you determine which waiver programs may be a good fit for you: <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/resources/compare-long-term-services-supports-ltss-programs>.

To learn more, contact your service coordinator with your MCO, your local ADRC or LIDDA or call 2-1-1. Two waiver and entitlement programs that you should:

Long-Term Care Facilities

Specialized

Some long-term care facilities may provide care specifically for people with brain injuries. Many of these facilities can be expensive or may not take insurance, Medicaid or have available charity services. People may be able to pay for services through private funds, old workers comp, settlements, trust funds, etc. Contact the Office of Acquired Brain Injury for a list of these facilities.

General

Finding long-term care for yourself or a family member is important. While nothing can replace visiting a facility or meeting with a provider in person, the Long-Term Care Provider Search can help you learn more about these providers and facilities. The LTC Provider Search, <https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/LTCSearch/>, includes information on:

- Nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and intermediate care facilities
- Daytime programs for adults
- Home health, hospice and personal assistance services
- Community-based waiver programs

Respite Care

Many families don't consider taking care of a loved one a burden. However, caregiving without any breaks can take a toll on physical and emotional health. Respite care helps caregivers rest, while the person with a disability continues to receive care in a safe environment. Use the respite provider search at taketimetexas.org to find a provider near you based on the type of service you need.

Palliative Care

A life-changing or serious illness can alter your quality of life. Your medical team, family and friends provide important support. Patient-centered and family-focused palliative care — specialized medical care for people with serious illness — can improve the life of anyone with a chronic and serious illness. The focal point of palliative care is to provide better holistic symptom, pain and stress management for as long as your illness lasts, in coordination with ongoing concurrent treatment or hospice care. Learn more at hhs.texas.gov/services/health/palliative-care.

Independence Services

2-1-1 Texas

2-1-1 Texas can help you find services and supports to live more independently after a brain injury. Call 2-1-1 (877-541-7905) or search for services online at 211texas.org.

Independent Living Services

Centers for Independent Living provide independent living services across the state. ILS helps people with disabilities achieve greater independence in the home and community, assists people in navigating disability benefits and supports them through counselling and advocacy. Independent living services include helping you:

- Live and accomplish daily tasks more independently
- Participate in your favorite activities
- Improve communication
- Improve transportation access and mobility
- Increase access to the community and participation in society

Find your local CIL at <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/independent-living-services>.

Medical Equipment and Supplies

- **Texas Technology Access Program - University of Texas** offers short- and long-term assistive technology lending programs. Visit <https://tatp.edb.utexas.edu/> to learn more, request a device and find links to other resources, or call 800-828-7839 (Austin: 512-232-0740).
- **UsedHME**, [usedHME.com](https://usedhme.com), is a free listing service where people can buy, sell or find donated used home medical equipment.
- **Rehabilitation Services Volunteer Project (Regional Resource - Houston)** provides physical rehabilitation services and equipment to uninsured people with disabilities. The medical equipment division provides durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs, bathroom equipment and walkers to people with disabilities, regardless of diagnosis, who lack access to this equipment. Learn more at rsvptexas.org or by calling 855-825-RSVP (855-825-7787).
- **DME Exchange of Dallas (Regional Resource)** collects, refurbishes and sanitizes donated equipment and distributes the equipment to people whose income and insurance will not cover doctor-ordered equipment. Learn more at dfwdmeexchange.org or call 214-997-3639.
- **Project MEND (Regional Resource - San Antonio)** offers medical equipment and assistive technology to people who cannot afford the items they need or have gaps in insurance coverage. The program repairs, refurbishes and sanitizes donations of gently used medical equipment. They serve children, aging adults, veterans, their spouses and children and persons who are homeless. Learn more at projectmend.org or call 210-223-6363.
- **GoodwheelChairs.org (Regional Resource - Austin)** provides low cost, gently used wheelchairs, power chairs and scooters. Learn more at goodwheelchairs.org/index.html or call 512-420-8005.

Home Modifications

- **Texas Ramps** builds wheelchair ramps for disabled or elderly persons who cannot afford to buy one. To learn more or to request a ramp, visit texasramps.org, or email info@texasramps.org or call 214-675-1230.

Housing

- **The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs** can help you find resources for affordable housing at tdhca.state.tx.us/texans.htm.
- **Local Public Housing Agencies** can help you find public housing assistance. To find your local PHA, visit hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts/tx.
- **Community for Permanent Supported Housing (Regional Resource - North Texas)** creates housing options with the North Texas community for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and social challenges, regardless of IQ, and offers educational services for these adults and their families to encourage independent living. To learn more, visit txcpsh.org.

Transportation

- **Public Transportation Paratransit Services for Persons with Disabilities** help people travel in the community. Contact the local transit authority and ask for the paratransit coordinator. You can find a full list of public transportation agencies in Texas at <http://www.apta.com/resources/links/unitedstates/Pages/TexasTransitLinks.aspx>.
- **Medicaid Medical Transportation Program** helps people with Medicaid benefits get to the doctor's office, dentist, hospital, drug store or any other location where they receive Medicaid services. To use this service, you must not have access to any other means of transportation. To schedule a ride, call:
 - Houston/Beaumont area: 855-687-4786
 - Dallas area: 855-687-3255
 - Everywhere else: 877-633-8747 (877-MED-TRIP)

Before you call for a ride, you must have already made a doctor's appointment. To obtain a ride, call at least two work days in advance. If you travel a long distance to your appointment, be sure to call at least five work days in advance. When you call, have the following information ready to share:

- Medicaid ID or social security number
- Address where you will need to be picked up
- Name, address and phone number of the provider
- The date and time of your doctor's visit
- If you or your children have any special needs so they send the right type of vehicle.

To learn more about getting a ride, visit <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/questions-about-your-benefits/getting-a-ride-frequently-asked-questions>.

Issues with Services

Office of the Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman assists the public with issues or complaints about health and human services programs, agencies or personnel. If you have a problem or complaint about a health and human services program or service, the Office of the Ombudsman encourages you to first discuss it with the person, program or office involved. Many times, they will be able to explain a specific policy or correct the problem immediately. If your problem or complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can reach the Office of the Ombudsman by calling 877-787-8999 or visiting hhs.texas.gov/ombudsman.

Insurance Issues

Texas Insurance Code

Chapter 1352 sets forth requirements for certain health benefit plans to cover treatment and rehabilitation services that treat acquired brain injury. Those plans must include coverage for services related to an acquired brain injury and cannot exclude those services, including cognitive rehabilitation therapy, when the services are required for and related to treatment of an acquired brain injury. This applies to health benefit plans that provide comprehensive benefits for medical or surgical expenses incurred as a result of a health condition, accident or sickness. Learn more at www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/IN/htm/IN.1352.htm.

Texas Department of Insurance

The Texas Department of Insurance helps consumers resolve complaints against insurance companies, health maintenance organizations, insurance agents and adjusters. To learn more about getting help with insurance issues, or to file a complaint, visit tdi.texas.gov/consumer/complfrm.html. You can also email ConsumerProtection@tdi.texas.gov or call 800-252-3439 with questions and concerns.

This version of the Texas Brain Injury Resource Guide was last updated on April 10, 2018.

Definitions

Acquired Brain Injury - An acquired brain injury is brain damage caused by events after birth, rather than as part of a genetic disorder or something the person was born with. They can be caused by strokes, brain illness and other brain injuries. They are not the same as degenerative brain conditions such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

Traumatic Brain Injury - A traumatic brain injury is a type of acquired brain injury caused by an external force that disrupts the normal function of the brain, such as a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury.

What are DADS and DARS?

The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services and the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services were two agencies that used to house many of the programs that serve people with disabilities, including brain injury. In the 2015 Legislative Session, a bill abolished DADS and DARS, and transferred the duties and programs of those agencies to various other agencies. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission absorbed a majority of the DADS and DARS programs. However, some programs ended up at other agencies. For example, vocational rehabilitation moved to the Texas Workforce Commission. While DADS and DARS may no longer exist, the programs that were run by those agencies still do.