**THI/SCI TRUST FUND**

**ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**August 11, 2022**

**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 10:05 a.m. on August 11, 2022.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Board Members: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

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

Agency Staff: Melinda Richard, Lora Bennett, Tonia Gedward, Ayanna Wilson and John Korduner

Contractors Not in Attendance: Kimberly Hill

Public: None

**Board Meeting attendee Introductions**

Tonia introduced the Advisory Board’s newest members, Dr. Andrea Toomer (not in attendance) and Dr. Floyd Roberts. Dr. Toomer is the designee for the President of the Louisiana State Medical Society. Dr. Roberts is the designee for the President of the Louisiana Hospital Association. Tonia also congratulated and thanked Mr. Andrew Kuyoro and Dr. John Fanning for being reappointed to serve another term on the board. She stated as of today, we finally have a full board. She added, that on behalf of the Office of Aging and Adult Services and the THSCI Trust Fund program, she would like to thank everyone for their assistance in helping reach the goal of getting 100% of the board member seats filled.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The board reviewed the minutes from the last meeting held on May 12, 2022. Andrew asked if anyone had any comments or corrections about the minutes. Dr. Chafetz asked to correct a sentence at the bottom of page two that stated “She stated emails or real-life examples such as an email she read stating they are not recommending people or they are not applying because it is a waste of time.” Dr. Chafetz stated that the sentence did not make sense to him. Sherlyn explained that Mendy was speaking of what Kim (BIALA) had reported to the board. Kim stated that people were not applying for the program anymore because there was such a long wait. Sherlyn stated it could be rewritten and that we will send out a revised copy of the minutes. Mr. Kuyoro suggested changing the word “waitlist” to “waiting list”. Sherlyn said that it is a department-wide term. Lora corrected the shortfall amount from $600,00 to $600,000. Mr. Matherne moved to accept the minutes with the corrections. Dr. Chafetz seconded. The meeting minutes were approved with the changes.

**PROGRAM UPDATES / BUDGET-FINANCIAL REPORT – SHERLYN SULLIVAN**

Sherlyn asked everyone to review the financial report. She stated the financial report represents the previous fiscal year (FY22). The report finalizes FY22 expenditures. She stated she told them all last year the program would only collect about $1.2 million, because of the fees and fines being reduced due to COVID. She stated our final number was $1.2 million which was on track with the projections. She said the good news is that we stated we were going to be short by $400,000 but instead we were short by $336,000. She explained this was due to the client services being much lower last month than in previous months. She added that, with the extra money we received in FY23, we will be able to cover this gap and add another $400,000 to client services.

Sherlyn explained that we have been upside down with how much we spend on administrative services versus client services all year long. She stated, “[although] we would like to keep that at approximately a 20:80 ratio we actually ended the [fiscal] year with an almost 30:70 ratio. We are hoping the extra money will help us return to the normal 20:80 ratio. She then opened the floor for questions. Dr. Roberts asked if the funds received are from DUIs only. Sherlyn answered that the funds are from DUIs, reckless operations and speeding tickets. Representative Bagley explained how the funds are disbursed. He stated the funds collected from each municipality go into an account. It is then split between at least 14 different agencies. Rep. Bagley stated he will invite Mr. Kuyoro to the next legislative meeting to explain how the Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury program funds are used. Ms. Pacaccio stated as a parent of a TBI participant, she would like to attend the meeting to explain how helpful the program has been for her.

**PROGRAM STATUS – TONIA GEDWARD**

Tonia started by thanking our legislators for doing a great job at securing additional funding for the program. The program received $800,000 in state general funds for FY23.

She stated the additional funding will enable the program to bridge the almost $400,000 gap in last years expenditures. In addition, the remaining $400,000 will allow the program to initiate reviews on sixty-nine (69) 2018 waitlist applicants. The program forwarded the applications from the waitlist to Support Coordination (SC) agencies to complete initial assessment reviews. The applications were sent to the SC agencies on August 1, 2022, and are due back by September 14th. She added that the Support Coordination agencies have 30 business days to return the completed initial assessment packets to the program for review, so eligibility determinations can be made. The 30-day timeframe allows the Support Coordination agencies enough time to schedule and conduct the face-to-face visit. It also allows the applicant enough time to get the Medical Eligibility Form completed by his or her physician. Tonia explained during this time, her staff will be following up with the support coordinator every ten (10) business days to ensure the support coordinator is following up with the applicants. So far, the program has received eight (8) incomplete reviews. We are waiting on the Medical Eligibility Forms from the applicants.

As of 8/10/22, there are 340 applicants on the waitlist. This includes the 2018 applicants that are currently in the Initial Assessment Review phase pending an eligibility determination. See below for the number of applications received by the year.

Application Year Number of Appl.

2018 72 (Pending Eligibility Determinations)

2019 98

2020 63

2021 60

2022 47

Tonia stated currently we have 487 (eligible) participants. Tonia informed the board that since the last board meeting, the program processed numerous participant requests.

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| **Request Type** | **Total** |
| New Applications | 22 |
| Participant Services Plans | 94 |
| Purchase Authorizations | 89 |
| Annual Assessment | 106 |
| Payments | 183 |
| Caseload Change Requests   * Close a Case (18) * Transfer a participant case to another region (5) * Update a participant’s information (5) * Reinstate a participant’s case (3) * Request to mail a new application (24) | 55 |

(PSP); issued; reviewed annual assessment documents; released (authorized) payments to vendors; reviewed 22 (approved and denied) new applications and processed 55 Caseload Change requests and requests to mail new applications. She stated the program received: 18 requests to close participant cases and 5 requests to transfer participant cases to another region. We received 5 requests to update the participant’s information. There were 3 requests to reinstate a participant’s case and 24 requests for new applications. She informed the board that the program mailed the requested applications directly to the individuals.

She explained the support coordinators submit Participant Service Plans to the program to request goods and services on behalf of the participant. These requests consist of goods and services such as wheelchairs, medical supplies, home modifications, and assistive devices.

She stated the Annual Assessment Documents are received from the participant’s support coordinator on an annual basis. The assessment document is a standardized assessment of each participant’s functional capabilities and health needs.

She stated the Payments Released to Vendors are based on PSP’s that were previously approved. The vendor has since delivered the goods and/or services and provided an invoice requesting payment.

Tonia stated she forwarded resource information received from BIALA and other organizations to the support coordination agencies to distribute to the program participants when conducting face-to-face visits and quarterly contacts.

On July 28, 2022, Tonia and her staff conducted an annual training with the Support Coordination agencies. The training was an overview of the program policies and procedures. She explained that she provided information about the program services, the eligibility process, and how to properly complete a Participant Service Plan Request. It was especially useful in preparing the Support Coordinators for the applications they were to receive on August 1, 2022.

In other process improvement efforts, Tonia stated as always, that she is trying to streamline the program processes. She developed a system in SharePoint that send weekly status reports to staff. The reports remind her and her staff about pending tasks so that they do not drop the ball on any requests. She stated that she continues to update policy and procedures to better serve program applicants and participants.

Tonia stated the program hired a part-time employee, Ms. Debra Lang, to start calling the 305 municipalities that are associated with the Louisiana Municipal Association. Tonia created a survey that would capture information regarding the municipalities’ ticketing and court processes. The questionnaire also captures the name and email address of the clerk or contact person within the office. In addition, it captures an estimated number of tickets the municipalities give out each month. She stated, “At the end of each questionnaire, we ask them if they would like for us to mail or email them an updated reporting form as well as additional information about the program.” She stated once Ms. Debra completes all of the calls, the program will mail or email the information to the municipalities that requested forms or additional information.

Tonia stated Ms. Debra is doing a great job at getting the municipalities to respond to the questionnaire. She added that once the program has gathered all of the information, she will compare their responses to actual fees received each month to make sure they match.

Tonia stated that the Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA) allowed the program to include a write-up in its e-newsletter about the program and the importance of fee collections received from the municipalities. The write-up also included information about the program questionnaire. LMA also allowed the program to include a one-pager in their informational bag that was distributed during their annual convention held on July 28-30th.

She added that LMA is holding its Annual Louisiana Municipal Clerks’ Institute on 10/23/22. This meeting is open to all municipal clerks. The clerks can earn educational points for their Louisiana Certified Municipal Clerk (LCMC) and Louisiana Certified Municipal Deputy Clerk (LCMDC) certifications. Tonia will be reaching out to LMA in early September to inquire about speaking at the training.

Tonia stated, “As we all know, the information that we receive from the municipalities is self-reported. We are constantly looking for other ways to confirm that what they are reporting to the program is accurate. For example, we reached out to the Louisiana Clerks of Court Association to see if they keep track of ticketing information statewide. According to the Executive Director, they do not keep track of ticketing information.”

She stated that last year the Advisory Board discussed changing the name of the program from the Traumatic **Head** and Spinal Cord Injury program to the Traumatic **Brain** and Spinal Cord Injury. She would like to bring this back to the table for discussion. She then opened the floor for discussion. And there was a lot of discussion about how to make this happen during this fiscal session. Could be requested by LDH or added onto another bill where some other name is being changed according to Senator Foil.

**Brain Injury Association of Louisiana (BIALA) Updates- Kimberly hill**

Yvette Pacaccio presented BIALA’s updates on behalf of Kimberly Hill. She stated that BIALA’s helpline has remained consistent, receiving on average 24 calls per month. The website continues to receive good traction with an average of 2,626 page views per month. She stated that BIALA’s monthly virtual peer group calls continued with guest speakers over the past few months. Some rehab hospitals continue to call in with current patients and BIALA is connecting them immediately with peer support and resources. In-person in-services have been minimal but contact with case managers and rehab directors remains consistent each month. She informed the board that in July when the updated trust fund application was released, it was sent to 65 facilities (acute and rehab hospitals) statewide. BIALA used this opportunity to share the application, information about BIALA’s programs and services, and the resource center. During the contact, BIALA also updated the facility’s contact information.

Yvette stated that BIALA has actively been going through the 3,000-plus resources in their resource guide and making any necessary updates. This will continue over the next few months. She added as new resources are discovered, they include those resources in the guide.

In June, BIALA represented Louisiana in United Spinal Association’s advocacy event in Washington DC. The name of the event was the “Roll on Capitol Hill”. Topics ranged from consumer protections and assistance in air travel for people with disabilities, increased funding for the brain and spinal cord injury model systems (basically increasing funding that considers inflation and growth of brain and spinal cord injuries since 2000), supporting disability community independence (having Medicaid lift the “in home” restriction to allow access to mobility devices that meet wheelchair users’ needs in the home and/or in the community), and more.

She added that in July, due to the success of the resource backpacks they provided to hospitals statewide for newly injured patients, they applied for and received a $20,000 charitable gift to assemble and distribute additional backpacks.

BIALA’s Unmasking Brain Injury art exhibit continues to travel the state. In July, the exhibit was at the East Baton Rouge Main Library where a reception was held to educate and raise awareness about brain injuries. Knowing the importance of community and fellowship, they have sponsored adaptive water-skiing clinics all summer and are hosting two recreational events for individuals with brain and/or spinal cord injuries.

Yvette stated, “On behalf of the board of directors and staff of BIALA, we thank you for your continued support. Because of your support, we will continue our mission to be the statewide resource for people impacted by brain and/or spinal cord injury.**”**

Melinda (Mendy) Richard, the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Aging and Adult Services, reintroduced herself to the board members since there were a few new members. Mr. Kuyoro asked if anyone had any other questions. Dr. Roberts asked if the program had an estimate of how many callers have not applied because of the frustration of the waitlist. She stated the program did not know it was happening until Kim mentioned it at the last meeting due to her getting several (customer service) calls. Mendy asked if there was a way to pull diagnostic codes that are related to these types of (injury-related) incidents. She asked if the Hospital Association has an overview of coding that is occurring in the hospital. Dr. Roberts said that he would have to determine which codes Mendy is interested in to pull the data from the last six months or so. Mendy stated she thinks the Healthcare Quality Forum has access to about 90% of the electronic health records for the hospitals in the state. She stated it is not everything but it is a large portion of the database. She stated just a snapshot would be enough to help us.

**Other Business**

None

**Public Comment**

None

**FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next board meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., at The Bienville Building 628 North Fourth St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, and Room 173.

**2022 THSCI Advisory boaRd mEEtings:**

May 12, 2022

August 11, 2022

November 10, 2022

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.