

FREE LEGAL CLINICS for VERMONT VETERANS with TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

According to the Center for Disease Control, there are an estimated 5.3 million Americans currently living with disabilities caused by a traumatic injury to the brain. That number is likely to grow considerably as more veterans return home from Iraq and Afghanistan with a brain injury, which is the signature injury of these conflicts.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is defined as an insult to the brain caused by an external physical force. The effects of exposure to a blast from improvised explosive devices (IED's) and other munitions, vehicular accidents, gunshot wounds and other events causing a sudden impact to the head, can result in TBI. Modern emergency medical care has increased the number of TBI survivors, and many will need ongoing medical and daily living support. Long term effects for TBI survivors vary with the severity of the injury and range from emotional, balance and memory problems to cognitive and physical disabilities that seriously compromise daily living skills.

Vermont Protection & Advocacy, Inc. (VP&A) is a federally funded, non-profit agency that provides legal services and advocacy to individuals with disabilities. VP&A is working with Vermont Legal Aid's Disability Law Project and the Brain Injury Association of Vermont to provide free legal clinics to veterans with TBI and family members throughout the state. The legal clinics will include an overview of TBI and provide information on legal rights and entitlements for TBI survivors. Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security benefits, guardianship, the Americans with Disabilities Act and other legal issues will be covered.

All veterans with TBI, family members and caregivers are welcome and encouraged to attend. Clinics will be held in Colchester, VT on Tuesday, May 15, 2007, at the Family Assistance Center, 789 Vermont National Guard Road, from 4:30 to 6:30 PM; in Bennington, VT on Thursday, May 17th at the Vermont Veterans' Home, 325 North Street, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM; in White River Junction, VT on Wednesday, May 23rd at the Veterans' Administration, Building #44, Room 103B, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM; and in St Albans, VT on Thursday, May 24th at the National Guard Armory, 18 Fairfield Street, from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM. There is no charge for the clinics and light refreshments will be provided. For more information and to register please call or e-mail Marsha Bancroft at Vermont Protection & Advocacy, Inc., 1-800-834-7890 or marsha@vtpa.org.