



**BUILDING BRIDGES**  
*to Supports & Opportunities*

# MEDIA KIT

**National Brain Injury  
Employment Conference**

July 17-18, 2009  
Denver, CO





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## National Brain Injury Employment Conference 2009 – Presenter Bios

**Ron Drach** works at the Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS) as the Director of Government and Legislative Affairs. He focuses on legislative employment issues that affect the Departments of Labor, Veterans Affairs and Defense. Drach also supports the America's Heroes at Work project, a DOL initiative that addresses the employment needs of veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Previously he served as the National Employment Director for Disabled American Veterans, where he led successful initiatives to support veteran employment and vocational rehabilitation. He also addressed obstacles to employment, exploring disability issues, homelessness and other socioeconomic concerns. Drach is the father of two daughters, Tiffany and Amber. He and his wife, Carolyn, currently live in Maryland just outside of Washington, D.C.

**David Seaton** is a graduate of the University of Texas (UT) and completed his graduate studies in rehabilitation counseling at the UT Health Science Center. He is president of the Seaton Foundation and the Center for LifeLong Living & Planning ([www.CLLP.org](http://www.CLLP.org)) and the founder/CEO of Therapeutic Communities ([www.tc-tx.com](http://www.tc-tx.com)), providing lifelong living communities in San Marcos and Austin, Texas. He has worked with adults with cognitive disabilities for more than 25 years, written numerous chapters and articles on long-term disability issues, given numerous presentations across North America and Europe and has served on many state and national disability boards.

**Diane Van Deren** was diagnosed with epilepsy while she was pregnant with her third child. A strong and accomplished athlete and former professional tennis player, Diane continued to pursue her athletic passions. However, after ten years of frightening and debilitating seizures, she underwent radical brain surgery that removed part of her right temporal lobe. "After learning and understanding what I had lost from this journey, there was a time of sadness. Epilepsy and the surgery affected my personal life as a wife, mom and athlete," she reflected. A North Face athlete, Diane competes in 100-mile trail runs, snowshoe races and was a contender in the Iditarod Trail Invitational in Alaska. She is also a spokesperson for the Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Institute at Children's Hospital of Colorado, which educates children on wearing helmets to prevent brain injuries. She also raises money for Craig Hospital through her Miles for a Mission initiative. She lives in Sedalia, Colorado, with her husband and three children.

**Stanley Williams** is the coordinator of the Illinois Brain Injury Program, which hosts the TBI Implementation grant and the Medicaid Wavier for the state of Illinois. Mr. Williams attended the University of Wyoming and Eastern Illinois University, where he received training in education, African-American physiology and environmental biology. In the past few years, Mr. Williams has worked with the state to develop a Minority HIV program to address the rising HIV rates of minority communities. Mr. Williams's focus will address the disparities in healthcare for minorities. As a Certified Brain Injury Specialist, Mr. Williams is rewriting the State Plan on Brain and Spinal Cord Injury, as well as training the state's vocational rehabilitation staff on cultural competency.





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## **Denver Options' Innovative Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Events and Programs**

### **National Brain Injury Conference**

CTAT, a division of Denver Options, is a nationally recognized training organization specializing in disability-related education inspiring choice, self-sufficiency, contribution, employment and achievement through quality supports and services for people with disabilities. They designed the first National Brain Injury Employment Conference three years ago, and the response was so positive that it is now an annual event.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Survivor Series**

The TBI Survivor Series helps people with traumatic brain injury learn and use successful strategies to find employment, enhance relationships and explore areas of interest in their lives. The series, sponsored by the Colorado TBI Trust Fund, provides helpful tools and useful information for survivors, family members, caretakers and professionals.

### **Colorado Connections**

Colorado Connections is a statewide program of Denver Options that provides care coordination to children and adults with traumatic brain injury through the Colorado Traumatic Brain Injury Trust Fund. Colorado Connections' care coordinators work with survivors to find the best care and support systems to meet their individualized needs.

### **Operation TBI Freedom**

Operation TBI Freedom assists veterans and service members with service-related traumatic brain injuries that occurred on or after 9/11/01. This free, statewide program in Colorado relies on Denver Options' 16 years of care coordination experience with people with cognitive challenges. The program is supported through private donations and helps military personnel and veterans make a transition to full and satisfying civilian lives.



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*[www.ctat-training.com](http://www.ctat-training.com)  
[www.denveroptions.org](http://www.denveroptions.org)*



## National Facts about Traumatic Brain Injury

### What is a traumatic brain injury?

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is defined as a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI. The severity of such an injury may range from “mild,” i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness to “severe,” i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury. A TBI can result in short- or long-term problems with independent function.

### How many people have TBI?

Of the 1.4 million who sustain a TBI each year in the United States:

- 50,000 die,
- 235,000 are hospitalized, and
- 1.1 million are treated and released from an emergency department.

The number of people with TBI who are not seen in an emergency department or who receive no care is unknown.

### What causes TBI?

The leading causes of TBI are:

- Falls (28%),
- Motor vehicle traffic crashes (20%),
- Struck by/against (19%), and
- Assaults (11%).

Blasts are a leading cause of TBI for active duty military personnel in war zones.

### Who is at highest risk for TBI?

- Males are about 1.5 times as likely as females to sustain a TBI.
- The two age groups at highest risk for TBI are 0 to 4 year olds and 15 to 19 year olds.
- Certain military duties (e.g., paratrooper) increase the risk of sustaining a TBI.
- African Americans have the highest death rate from TBI.



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### ***Facts (Continued)***

#### **What are the costs of TBI?**

Direct medical costs and indirect costs such as lost productivity of TBI totaled an estimated \$56.3 billion in the United States in 1995.

#### **What are the long-term consequences of TBI?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that at least 5.3 million Americans currently have a long-term or lifelong need for help to perform activities of daily living as a result of a TBI. According to one study, about 40% of those hospitalized with a TBI had at least one unmet need for services one year after their injury. The most frequent unmet needs were:

- Improving memory and problem solving,
- Managing stress and emotional upsets,
- Controlling one's temper, and
- Improving one's job skills.

TBI can cause a wide range of functional changes affecting thinking, sensation, language and/or emotions. It can also cause epilepsy and increase the risk for conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and other brain disorders that become more prevalent with age.

**Source: Brain Injury Association of America**