

Colorado Brain Injury Program Children/Youth Needs Assessment



Executive Summary

November 15, 2015

Evaluation Conducted and Written by:



Sub-contractor of Pinnacle Resources, Inc.

Background

The Colorado Brain Injury Program was interested in gaining an understanding as to why there appears to be a relatively low number of children/youth being served through the Youth Brain Injury Connections (YBIC) program. YBIC is a partnership among the Colorado Department of Education, Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado and the Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs (HCP) to provide coordinated care across community health and education settings to meet the individual needs of children and youth (0-21 years old) with a brain injury (BI). The Colorado Brain Injury Program worked with an independent evaluation contractor to conduct a needs assessment to determine the following:

1. Are potential participants aware of the program?
2. Do the current services fill a need identified by participants?
3. Are there either additional or different needs that the program could fill (staying within the scope of the statute) that would be more beneficial to children/youth with brain injury and their families than the services that are currently being provided?

Methods

Online surveys were conducted between October 22 and November 6, 2015 with parents of children who have experienced a brain injury and professionals who work with children who have experienced a brain injury and their families. Interviews are currently being conducted with parents/caregivers and professional which are not included in this executive summary.

- 83 parents/caregivers and 269 professionals responded to surveys.
- Most children were reported to be male (57.7%), White (76.4%), and from Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, and El Paso counties. Overall, parent/caregiver responses were from 19 counties across the state were represented in the analysis.
- Over half of parents/caregivers reported that their child's injury was severe and resulted from a fall (23%), accident (20%), or sports related incident (19%).
- 45% of professional respondents were health care professionals and 18% were school staff or teachers. Other professions included rehabilitation providers, mental health providers, and care coordinators.
- Professionals represented 32 of the 64 Colorado counties.

Key Findings

Awareness

- Majority of parents/caregivers reported looking for resources or services to help their child and family better handle the impact of the injury (89%) and most parents reported looking immediately after the injury (65%).
- Over half of parents/caregivers reported that they were not at all familiar with YBIC (54%) and only one respondent reported that they were extremely familiar with YBIC. Similarly, over half of professionals reported that they were not at all familiar (30%) or only slightly familiar (24%) with YBIC. These professionals reported searching the internet or asking colleagues for information on services or resources for children with BI.
- Of the professionals with familiarity with YBIC (n=145), the majority (59%, n=86) do not refer clients to YBIC. Approximately half of these respondents reported this was because they did not know they could refer clients to YBIC (49%, n=42).
- Over 30% of professionals reporting that they did refer clients to YBIC did not know about the adequacy of the services. Approximately 50% rated YBIC services as moderately adequate or very adequate.
- Over half of parents/caregivers who had heard of YBIC learned about services through BIAC, an internet search, a specialist, school personnel or friend/family.
- Of those parents/caregivers reporting using YBIC services, the most commonly used were the website (24%), HCP Care Coordination (20%), and Education Consultation (17%).
- 70% (n=44) of parents/caregivers reported that they would like to learn more about YBIC services.

Needs

- Over 70% of parents/caregivers reported that the most common issues facing children with brain injuries were: Attention/Focusing Skills, Memory/Cognition, Rehabilitation, Medical Issues, and School/Education Issues.
- Over 70% of professionals reported that the biggest issues facing children with brain injuries were: Memory/Cognition, Attention/Focusing, Family Stress/Needs, Rehabilitation, Interpersonal Skills, Mental Health, and School Education Issues.
- The top three priorities mentioned by parents to help their children with BI were: Education Consultation (42%), BI training for teachers (36%), Parenting Support (33%).
- The top three priorities mentioned by professionals to help children with BI and their families were: BI training for teachers and education system (40%), Care Coordination/ Case Management (36%), and Parenting Support (33%).

Barriers

- The biggest barriers to obtaining services reported by parents/caregivers were: difficulty working with school (37%), lack of trained personnel (36%), and services not available locally (33%).
- The biggest barriers to obtaining services reported by professionals were: families unaware of services and resources (50%), difficulty understanding process or paperwork for services (34%), and services not available locally (33%).

Recommendations

- Professionals and parents/caregivers shared ideas for how YBIC could improve services and suggestions focused on increasing awareness of YBIC and services available, expanding resources or services across the state, improving coordination between service providers and referral sources, and increasing knowledgeable staff.
- Professionals also provided ideas on how YBIC could increase referrals. Themes and ideas were similar to the previous question about how YBIC could improve services. The themes were: increase awareness of YBIC services, increase collaboration and communication with key partners; and increase availability of resources, materials and staff.

A comprehensive report will be completed in December 2015 which will include more detailed information and recommendations based on each of the methods utilized for the needs assessment.