

## Rosen Hagood Observes Brain Injury Awareness Month

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By Andrew D. Gowdown on March 1, 2024

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month, a time to reflect on the impact these devastating and often life-changing events have on victims and their loved ones. Here at Rosen Hagood, we represent clients who have suffered brain injuries and observe first-hand the challenges that they face. We also recognize the incredible work that doctors, caregivers, and families provide in supporting brain injury victims.

A brain injury can happen because of something internal, like a stroke or hemorrhage, but it is often the result of severe external force sustained to the head. These injuries are typically referred to as traumatic brain injuries, or TBIs. Numerous types of catastrophic events can cause TBIs. Falls, automobile accidents, truck accidents, assaults, sports-related injuries, occupational-related injuries, and overdoses are just some of the most common causes of brain injuries in the United States.

Brain injuries, especially TBIs, typically mean permanent life changes for the victim. These are not simply “head injuries,” but rather major disruption in the normal functioning and activity of the brain. Symptoms may not be apparent for weeks or even months after an injury, and can start out relatively mild but worsen over time. The symptoms of a TBI include, but are not limited to:

- Persistent and severe headaches
- Memory loss
- Confusion
- Fatigue
- Difficulty comprehending or concentrating
- Slurred speech or trouble speaking
- Chronic pain
- Irritability or emotional outbursts
- Depression
- Dizziness or balance issues
- Vision or hearing impairment
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Changes in sleep patterns

Brain injuries can change the victim’s personality, cause him or her to no longer enjoy activities

they once loved, and make it difficult or impossible to work. And that's to say nothing of the medical treatments and necessary care the victim will need, which can spell significant expenses for the rest of the victim's life. A solid network of healthcare professionals, caregivers, and supportive family is essential for ensuring the victim receives necessary assistance with basic daily tasks.

According to the **Brain Injury Association of America**, more than 5.3 million children and adults in the United States are living with a permanent brain injury-related disability. In South Carolina alone, more than 172,000 people are currently living with a long-term brain injury.

The nature of brain injuries is often misunderstood, which is why increased public awareness is so critical. Brain injuries are incredibly common amongst military veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq, children between the ages of 5 and 19 account for 30% of sports injuries, and approximately 50% of mild traumatic brain injuries are undetected and unreported. Better understanding of these injuries will hopefully translate into more resources being dedicated to research and treatment.

Our law firm is intimately involved with this issue through the work of attorney Andrew Gowdown, who regularly represents brain injury victims and their loved ones. Andrew is the current **President of the Board of Directors** of the **Brain Injury Association of South Carolina**, an organization that has been helping brain injury victims and their families and caregivers since 1998.

As we observe this year's Brain Injury Awareness Month, we commemorate the extraordinary efforts of those living with brain injuries to cope with and overcome their limitations. We join them and others in hoping that medical professionals will one day be able to undo their most tragic effects.