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JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute:

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Edison, NJ—March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. Every 23 seconds, a traumatic brain injury (TBI) occurs. In the next year, over 1.4 million Americans will sustain a TBI with more than 235,000 being hospitalized. Currently, there are at least 5.3 million Americans living with a disability caused by brain injury. The cost to society is estimated at \$56.3 billion annually.

“With numbers such as that, it’s important that we improve public understanding of brain injury and its life-altering consequences,” notes Carolyn Weil, LCSW, Program Coordinator for the Center for Head Injuries at JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute in Edison. “Awareness can prevent future TBIs, increase research funding, improve treatment results, and educate the public on coping with TBI once it hits home.”

Of the 1.4 million reported cases of TBI, 50,000 die and another 80,000 suffer disabilities. “A traumatic brain injury can be mild to severe, ranging from a brief loss of consciousness to coma, from an injury that will heal to disability from which one will never recover. The hard truth--so many of those injuries and subsequent disabilities are preventable,” says Weil.

“TBIs often come from common accidents...falls, car accidents, etc. and from not taking preventive and protective measures. Small changes, from consistent helmet usage during sports to seat belts can make a world of difference.” The leading causes of TBIs are:

- Falls
- Automobile and recreational vehicle accidents
- Bicycle and pedestrian accidents
- Assault
- Violent crimes

“Accidents may not be predicted, but you can still be cautious. We’ve learned over the years to wear our seat belts when we drive. To prevent from becoming another statistic, simply consider the exposure or risk. Does a situation or activity put you at risk for a fall

-moreBrain

Injury Awareness Month, add one

or a potential crash? If so, take the appropriate steps, whether they be protective gear or protective measures,” says Weil.

Founded in 1974, The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute (JRI) is a major component of Solaris Health System, one of New Jersey’s most comprehensive healthcare networks. JRI was one of the first rehabilitation centers in the country to recognize that individuals with acquired brain injury require a specialized treatment environment with high quality care provided by a corps of medical and rehabilitation specialists. In 1981, the Center for Head Injuries was established to provide a broad spectrum of services to patients with acquired brain injuries. The Center offers a variety of specialized services including rehabilitation medicine, rehabilitation nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, recreation therapy, neuropsychological evaluations, and treatment, audiology, nutrition services, social work management, vocational rehabilitation and community re-entry.

The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute headquartered at the JFK Medical Center in

Edison is a comprehensive rehabilitative service provider focused on educating the community on rehabilitative health and helping adults and children with disabilities reach optimal function and independence. The Institute offers a complete array of inpatient and outpatient programs and services in rehabilitative health, including stroke, orthopedics, prosthetic and orthotics, electrodiagnosis, fitness, cardiac, women's health, pain management, pediatrics, speech pathology and audiology, industrial and vocational rehab, and brain injury rehabilitation programs and services. JRI includes a 94-bed inpatient center in Edison. Outpatient centers are located in Edison, Metuchen, Monroe, Old Bridge, and Plainfield. Affiliated with the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is the Shore Rehabilitation Institute, a 40-bed inpatient and outpatient comprehensive rehabilitation hospital located in Brick, NJ. The Rehab Medicine Department at JRI also serves as the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for UMDNJ, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for its Comprehensive Inpatient Rehabilitation, Brain Injury, and Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation programs. For more information on The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute, call 732-321-7790 or visit the organization online at <http://www.njrehab.org>.

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