



# BRAIN INJURY SERVICES

8136 Old Keene Mille Road, B-102

Springfield, VA 22152

Phone: 703-451-8881

Fax: 703-451-8820

Website: [www.braininjurysvcs.org](http://www.braininjurysvcs.org)

## Media Release

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**CONTACT: Karen Brown**

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**Mobile: 703-472-3470**

**[kbrown@braininjurysvcs.org](mailto:kbrown@braininjurysvcs.org)**

### **Brain Injury Services Recipient of Potomac Health Foundation Grant**

For years, many survivors of brain injury struggle with the loss of skills that help them live and work in their communities and may lead to isolation or even institutionalization. There now may be help that can turn the tide for them. Brain Injury Services is now a recipient of the first grants awarded by the Potomac Health Foundation and will be hoping to make a huge difference in this issue. The funding will support the creation of an innovative program to provide neurobehavioral treatment to people with brain injury living in Eastern Prince William County. These services will enhance and support an individual's participation in their community and prevent the need for long term institutionalization.

This program supports one of Potomac Health Foundation's goals in supporting organizations and projects that promote innovation and address emerging health needs in the community. Potomac Health Foundation is one of the newest private health foundations in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It was established in December 2009 as a result of the merger between Potomac Hospital Corporation of Woodbridge, Virginia and Sentara Healthcare, also a Virginia not-for-profit corporation. Potomac Health Foundation serves the communities in eastern Prince William County, Virginia and adjacent communities in southeast Fairfax and north Stafford Counties.

Brain Injury Services was established in 1989 as a direct result of a work study directed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and was the first community based brain injury of its' kind in Virginia. In the last 22 years, it has expanded to serve all of Northern Virginia, Fredericksburg and surrounding Counties. It initially provided case management services but as gaps in services became apparent, BIS created innovative and new programs to address these needs. These services include: specialized case

management, day programs, supported living program, unique therapeutic groups, PALS, person-centered volunteering programs and a Survivor Speaker's Bureau. BIS has been successful in helping to develop its' service model throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is presently celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the BIS Child and Adolescent Program.

According to the BIS' Executive Director, Karen Brown, this model has been a project in the making for many years but lacked funding. In 2007, the Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission (JLARC) was directed to conduct a study on "access to brain injury services in the Commonwealth." Their findings relayed in the report, *Access to State Funded Brain Injury Services*, concluded that thousands of survivors of brain injuries suffer from behavioral issues as a result of their injuries. These survivors often end up receiving treatment out of state, and many more are inappropriately placed in long term care or correctional facilities. It also confirmed that there is an ongoing critical need for services for people with brain injury in the Commonwealth, particularly for those with the most significant impairments living in unserved and underserved areas. "We are extremely grateful for the foundation's vision to provide a safety net for the health and well-being of the most vulnerable residents," states Ms. Brown. This program is significant in building a model of services that will also be available to wounded warriors. BIS is a partner of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program.