

House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Brain Injury Informational Hearing Speaker Information
April 5th, 2023

David Kracke, JD

David Kracke is Oregon's Brain Injury Advocate/Coordinator. He has been a member of the Oregon State Bar for 28 years. He has an extensive background working with private and public stakeholder groups in the realm of legislative and policy initiatives. He is a recognized legislative and policy expert in TBI. David served as a lead author and legislative advocate for the stakeholder-informed efforts to pass concussion-response education laws, including Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 336.485, ("Max's Law"), one of the nation's first enacted laws establishing concussion protocols for concussed high school athletes and ORS 417.875, ("Jenna's Law), a companion law to Max's Law which provided state-wide concussion protocols for all youth athletes in the state of Oregon regardless of league affiliation.

David Nichols

David Nichols, an Oregon State University trained Mechanical Engineer, was designing Boeing's new 777x aircraft when he suffered a severe traumatic brain injury in a climbing accident. His life changed in an instant. Over five years since the accident, with access to the services and supports he needed to promote neuro-plasticity, Mr. Nichols' recovery has far surpassed all medical predictions.

Kathryn Nichols

Kathryn Nichols, a long-time government auditor in Oregon, is the mother and caregiver of a TBI survivor. Her journey illustrates how brain injuries impact family members and the challenges that families face accessing the complex set of resources they need to get the lives of loved ones back on track.

Dr. Jim Chesnutt, MD:

Dr. Chesnutt practices Family Medicine and Sports Medicine and works regularly with patients and athletes of all ages with concussions. Concussion expert, past Director of the OHSU concussion clinic, Governor's Council on Traumatic Brain Injury, member of the OSAA Medical Advisory Committee, Oregon Concussion Awareness and Management Program (OCAMP)

Richard Harris

Former Director of Oregon's Dept. of Addictions and Mental Health & Executive Director of Central City Concern. Current member of the Oregon Brain Injury Council and on the Steering Committee of Oregon's Administration for Community Living Traumatic Brain Injury State Partnership Program

Gary Cobb

Gary, a Veteran, is the founder of GCOBBCONSULTING LLC. Prior to his consulting work, Gary spent 22+ years in the non-profit sector of Health Care for the Homeless services. Combining a career of direct outreach services and public policy Gary found out through the years that the issue of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) was prevalent in the homeless population he worked with in outreach. However, in the public policy side of his work found that TBI was virtually nonexistent with support services for the same homeless population. Gary met the Governors TBI Task Force, had a couple of his clients that experienced TBI be case studies in the Task Force study and really set forth to today being a Traumatic Brain Injury Advocate. On a personal note, Gary himself has sustained head injuries from motorcycle accidents and a injury that left him blind in his left eye. Luckily his injuries haven't been debilitating as the TBI's were for some of his past clients. Gary also understands that his privileges in life were greater than those past clients' opportunities were, therefore, leading him to fight for a system of care that truly supports the houseless population that have a Traumatic Brain Injury.

Janae Hicks

Janae Hicks has dedicated her life to serving her country and her community. As a Navy veteran and current graduate student in speech-language pathology at Portland State University, Janae has a unique perspective on the challenges facing veterans and those with brain injuries. Janae has put her skills and experience to work in various settings, including conducting veteran brain injury screenings at the Washington county and Portland Stand Down events. In addition, Janae serves as an advisory board member and veteran liaison for Brain Injury Connections NW, an organization dedicated to providing support and resources to those affected by brain injuries.

Dr. McKay Sohlberg

Professor Sohlberg is known internationally for her pioneering work in the field of cognitive rehabilitation. Her research focuses on the development of treatments that help people with acquired brain injury manage cognitive impairments. Her work includes evaluating treatment protocols for individuals with persistent cognitive effects following concussive injuries, and individuals who are attempting to pursue postsecondary education following brain trauma. Dr. Sohlberg's past research includes the design and evaluation of assistive technology tools to support adolescents and adults with acquired brain injury function optimally in their communities. A recent focus has been on facilitation and evaluation of patient-centered goal setting in neurorehabilitation. Dr. Sohlberg has contributed to a number of evidence-based practice guidelines supported by the Academy of Neurologic Communication Disorders & Sciences and sits on several national committees working on interdisciplinary practice in cognitive rehabilitation. She has authored two seminal textbooks in the field. A new 2023 text titled Transformation

of Cognitive Rehabilitation has been released. Professor Sohlberg has been teaching and conducting research at the University of Oregon since 1994. She teaches graduate courses related to cognitive rehabilitation and evidence-based practice and co-founded the Brain Injury and Concussion Clinic (BrICC) in the College of Education HEDCO clinic.