BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Rick Willis, President & CEO
Brain Injury Association of America

2026 BRAIN INJURY & STROKE *Conference*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026

GRAPPONE CONFERENCE CENTER
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

TO REGISTER ONLINE:
https://p2p.onecause.com/42bisc

PRESENTING SPONSOR

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Creating a Bright Future Together

Rick Willis has been President and CEO of the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) since 2022. With nearly 30 years of leadership experience in the nonprofit space, Rick brings robust experience in patient advocacy and community development working within a number of chronic disease states. In his role as BIAA's President and CEO, Rick spearheaded BIAA's reunification with the United States Brain Injury Alliance. In bringing the organizations together with their networks of state affiliates, a wider, more impactful community of brain injury survivors, caregivers, advocates, and professionals was created. Additionally, Rick has worked with decision makers at both the federal and state level to advocate for the removal of barriers to access and care for the brain injury community and worked with national partners to raise awareness and generate support.

Also Featuring: **Behavioral Health, Substance Misuse and Brain Injury, and Developing Strategies**

Tom Brown has over 34 years of brain injury experience, as a family member, advocate, service provider, and previous state government employee. He holds the honor of being the longest standing Certified Brain Injury Specialist Trainer in the country and is passionate about providing educational opportunities for brain injury survivors, family members, and professionals. He currently works as the CEO of the Brookhaven NeuroRehabilitaiton Network, volunteers on the Boards of the Brain Injury Associations of Iowa and Oklahoma, serves as a gubernatorially appointed member of the Health and Human Services Council in the State of Iowa and serves as the Mayor of the City of Madrid, Iowa.

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Conference at a Glance

DISCLAIMER

The session presentations offered are intended to provide the latest information about services, therapies, and/or treatments available for brain injury and stroke survivors. It is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as an endorsement on the part of the Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire.

Level of Knowlege for Attendees: BEG - Beginner INT - Intermediate ADV - Advanced
Topic is geared towards: PRO-Professional SUR-Survivor/Family ALL- Everyone
Sessions approved by ASHA are highlighted in yellow

8:15 **Welcome**
8:30-9:30 **Keynote - Rick Willis, President & CEO, BIAA - *Creating a Bright Future Together***

	Track A - SLP	***Track B***	***Track C***	***Track D***	***Track E***
Session I 9:40-10:40	*When Words Fail: Using Singing as Communication Therapy* Allison W. Pollard, MT-BC **BEG/ALL**	*It Doesn't Have to be This Complicated: Integrated Care for TBI and SUD* Annette Escalante, MSW, MLADC **ADV/ALL**	*Rehab Team Collaboration to Achieve Primary Stroke Center Certification* Laura Bashour, OTR/L, CSRS Marabeth DeAngelis MA, CCC-SLP Brionne Turcotte, PT, DPT **BEG/ALL**	*The NeuroRehab Tangram: "The Interface of 'Me', ABI, Mental Health & Substance Use"* Thomas W. Brown, BS, CBIST **BEG/ADV/ALL**	*Microglial Cells in Recovery from TBI: Good or Bad?* Steven C. Pike, PhD **BEG/ALL**
10:40-10:55	***----------Break----------Please visit Exhibitors----------***				
Session II 11:00-12:00	*From Last Resort to Language Recovery Support: Integrating AAC to Aphasia Intervention* Szu-Han Kay Chen, PhD, CCC-SLP **INT/ALL**	*The World's First Prescription Music Product: Innovations in Stroke Rehabilitation* Brian Harris, MA, MT-BC, NMT/F, FACRM **BEG/ALL**	*Recovery and Healing After a Brain Injury* John Crampton, PsyD, LCMHC **BEG/ALL**	*Personal Intervention: "Building Individualized Behavior Plans"* Thomas W. Brown, BS, CBIST **BEG/ADV/ALL**	*Survivors Panel* Rene Camerato Crystal Carmen Moderators: Nicola Beauregard, PT, DPT, MSHA Nina Hopkins, OTR/L, NDT **BEG/ALL**
12:10-1:10	***----------Lunch----------Please visit Exhibitors----------***				
Session III 1:15-2:15	*I CHEWS: Transforming Dysphagia Management Through Informed Shared Decision-Making* Kate Phelps, MS, CCC-SLP Serena Jaskolka, MS, CCC-SLP Keri Miloro, MS, CAGS, CCC-SLP, BCS-S **BEG/ALL**	*Current Trends in Stroke Rehab* Alyssa Leslie, MOT, OTR/L **ADV/PRO**	*What Is Brain Health & How Does It Relate to Neuroplasticity* Therese O'Neil-Pirozzi, ScD, CCC-SLP **BEG/ALL** (80 min presentation)	*Hypersomnia (sleepiness) and Brain Injury: Diagnosis and New Treatment Options* Carolyn D'Ambrosio, MD, MS **ADV/ALL**	*Hidden Pain: Cognitive-Communication Challenges in Pain Assessment after Stroke* Joanne Morello, PT, DPT, CSRS Elizabeth Barbin, MS CCC-SLP, CBIS **BEG/ALL**
2:20 - 2:40	***---Break----Please visit Exhibitors***			***---Break------Please visit Exhibitors---***	
Session IV 2:45 - 3:45	*Navigating Neurogenic Recovery: Optimizing the Continuum of Care* Collean Combs, MS, CCC-SLP Amy Ramage, PhD **ADV/PRO**	*"Hold Me, Thrill Me, Stick Me, Chill Me: Approaches to Spasticity Management"* Donald Tower, DO **ADV/PRO**		*Yoga Nidra Guided Meditation for Sleep & Emotional Well Being after Brain Injury* Ellie Spriet, OTD, OTR/L, CKTP, RYT200 **BEG/ALL**	*Post Rehab Recovery: Activities and Resources for Ongoing Cognitive and Communication Skill Development* Gina England, MA, CCC-SLP **BEG/ALL**

Time Schedule & Session Descriptions

7:45 - 1:00 Registration
7:45 - 3:00 Exhibitors
8:15 Welcome

8:30 - 9:30 Keynote: Rick Willis, President & CEO, BIAA - *Creating a Bright Future Together*
Disclosure: Mr. Willis will be receiving a speaker's stipend today. He has no further relevant financial or non-financial disclosures to make.

9:40-10:40 SESSION I

A. When Words Fail: Using Singing as Communication Therapy ~ Allison W. Pollard, MT-BC ~ Upper Valley Music Center & Dartmouth Health ~ Explore how singing can bridge the gap when speech and language fall short. This session examines the therapeutic power of music as a tool for communication, connection, and self-expression. Disclosure: Ms. Pollard is not being compensated for this presentation, She has no relevant financial or non-financial disclosures to make.

B. It Doesn't Have to be This Complicated: Integrated Care for TBI and SUD ~ Annette Escalante, MSW, MLADC ~ Elliot Health System ~ This session merges the content on traumatic brain injury (TBI) and substance use disorders (SUD) to expand the capacity to address both issues in treatment.

C. Rehab Team Collaboration to Achieve Primary Stroke Center Certification ~ Laura Bashour, OTR/L, CSRS; Marabeth DeAngelis, MA, CCC-SLP; Brionne Turcotte, PT, DPT ~ Elliot Hosptial ~ A Primary Stroke Center (PSC) is a designation reserved for facilities that meet the standard of care outlined by the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Stroke Association to provide excellent stroke care. In January of 2025, the Elliot Hospital received certification through their accrediting body, DNV, as a PSC, affirming the hospital's readiness to handle a full range of stroke related medical problems. The rehab team participated by identifying areas of opportunity and growth based on current evidence and best practice. Each discipline will share their experiences and what outcomes helped to achieve this goal. Disclosure: Ms. Bashour, Ms. DeAngelis, and Ms Turcotte are not being compensated for this presentation and they have no relevant financial or non-financial disclosures to make.

D. The NeuroRehab Tangram: "The Interface of 'Me', ABI, Mental Health & Substance Use ~ Thomas W. Brown, BS, CBIST ~ Brookhaven NeuroRehabilitation Network ~ The rehabilitation of individuals with acquired brain injuries is profoundly challenging for the participants themselves and for the dedicated professionals who serve them. Burnout and apathy are all-too-common experiences on both sides of the therapeutic relationship. These experiences are often exacerbated when substance use and mental health struggles are present. This presentation explores key factors that can impact substance use and mental health struggles in the rehabilitation environment. In addition, it will offer practical, evidence-informed strategies to cultivate an environment where both professionals and rehabilitation participants can thrive in recovery and hopefully minimize substance use and mental health struggles.

E. Microglial Cells in Recovery from TBI: Good or Bad? ~ Steven C. Pike, PhD ~ Postdoctoral Fellow in Dept. of Neurology, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center~Microglia cells are a very unique type of cell that permanently lives in our brain. Of their many functions, these cells are a critical part of the immune system and how our brain protects itself from infections and injury. When the brain is damaged during a TBI, these cells are very important in addressing the wound and beginning the healing process. However, under certain conditions, these cells can shift from being "wound healing" to "hyperactive", in which their immune functions are hijacked to actually cause damage to the brain. This talk will discuss the ways in which microglia are both beneficial and harmful with regards to healing from TBI/stroke. In addition, we will also discuss the latest research on therapies directed toward microglia in TBI/stroke.

10:40 - 10:55 MORNING BREAK - Visit Exhibitors

11:00 - 12:00 SESSION II

A. From Last Resort to Language Recovery Support: Integrating AAC to Aphasia Intervention ~ Szu-Han Kay Chen, PhD, CCC-SLP ~ Dept of Communication Sciences and Disorders, UNH ~ This presentation will examine the evolving role of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in aphasia intervention, moving from its historical use as a last-resort compensatory approach to its current role as an active support for language recovery. The presenter will review key developments in AAC intervention and highlight emerging trends that support integration within routine speech-language pathology services. Two clinical studies will be presented to illustrate how AAC can be embedded in both inpatient and outpatient aphasia intervention. Study designs, outcome measures, and key results will be shared, followed by practical, clinically feasible ideas that participants can apply immediately in their own settings. Disclosure: Ms. Chen is not being compensated for this presentation. Ms. Chen has relevant financial and non-financial disclosures to make.

B.The World's First Prescription Music Product: Innovations in Stroke Rehabilitation ~ Brian Harris, MA, MT-BC, NMT/F, FACRM ~ MedRhythms ~ For the past 30 years, there has been growing evidence of the power of music on the human brain. More specifically, clinical trials around the world have been done demonstrating how rhythm and music can be used to improve walking post stroke. This presentation will highlight the neuroscience of rhythm and movement, and describe how MedRhythms has leveraged this to build the world's first prescription music product, which delivers Rhythmic Auditory Stimulation for chronic stroke survivors.

C. Recovery and Healing after a Brain Injury ~ John Crampton, PsyD, LCMHC ~ Neurobehavioral Counseling, LLC ~ An introduction to multiple domains of cognitive and neuropsychiatric symptoms linked to brain injuries.

D. Personal Intervention: "Building Individualized Behavior Plans" ~ Thomas W. Brown, BS, CBIST ~ Brookhaven NeuroRehabilitation Network ~ Many individuals that experience a brain injury struggle with a variety of behavioral challenges that impact their ability to live in the communities of their choice. This presentation will explore how cognition impacts behavior, the processes that promote the formation and reorganization of brain function, and practical ways to promote desired behavioral changes that lead to greater independence. While the presentation will focus on the management of aberrant behavior, the process can be generalized to a variety of behavioral struggles an individual may experience.

E. Survivor Panel ~ Rene Camerato and Crystal Carmen ~ Moderators: Nicola Beauregard, PT, DPT, MSH; Nina Hopkins, OTR/L, NDT ~ Survivors will share their experiences with the difficulties and joys found in recovery.

12:10 - 1:10 LUNCH

1:15 - 2:15 SESSION III

A. I CHEWS: Transforming Dysphagia Management Through Informed Shared Decision Making ~ Kate Phelps, MS, CCC-SLP~ New England Rehab Hospital; Serena Jaskolka, MS, CCC-SLP ~ Powerback Rehab; Keri Miloro, MS, CAGS, CCC-SLP, BCS-S ~ UNH, Boston Medical Center, Northeast Rehab Hospital ~ Dysphagia is a common sympton after a brain injury. Unfortunately, dysphagia management practice patterns are highly variable across health care professionals, in part due to inconsistent training, clinical experience, and organizational culture. These inconsistencies inadvertently cause harm to our patients resulting in devastating health outcomes and compromised quality of life. Informed shared decision making is a fundamental component of patient-centered care which is crucial to overcoming these barriers and improving outcomes for people with post-brain injury dysphagia. However, there are significant obstacles to implementing informed shared decision making at both the individual and institutional level. A new, innovative framework and public health initiative, called I CHEWS, seeks to streamline that implementaion process by putting patients at the center of their care. I CHEWS empowers brain injury survivors and their care partners to actively participate in their dysphagia-related health care decisions, ultimately reducing the burden of dysphagia on their lives. This session will demonstrate how to apply the I CHEWS framework to your clinical practice and easily facilitate evidence-based, patient-centered dysphagia health care. Disclosure: Ms. Phelps, Ms. Jaskolka, and Ms. Miloro are not being compensated for this presentation. Ms. Phelps and Ms. Miloro have relevant financial and non-financial disclosures to make. Ms. Jaskolka has no relevant financial disclosure to make and has a relevant non-financial disclosure to make.

B. Current Trends in Stroke Rehab ~ Alyssa Leslie, MOT, OTR/L ~ Encompass Health Rehab Hospital ~ An updated look at current trends in stroke rehabilitation, including emerging best practices to maximize functional outcomes in the acute phase of recovery.

C. What is Brain Health & How Does it Relate to Neuroplasticity? ~ Therese O'Neil-Pirozzi, ScD, CCC-SLP, ASHA Fellow ~Northeastern University ~ Brain health, one's state of physical, mental, and social well-being, and neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to change, adapt, and reorganize, are strongly related. This presentation will describe evidence-supported pillars of brain health and principles of neuroplasticity. Lifestyle implications of these for adults with and without acquired brain injury will be discussed, with an emphasis on modifiable factors, challenges to successfully targeting these, and strategies to address the challenges. Disclosure: Ms. O'Neil-Pirozzi is not being compensated for this presentation. Ms. O'Neil-Pirozzi has a relevant financial to make, but no non-financial dislosure. ***Note: This is an 80-minute presentation.***

D. Hypersomnia (sleepiness) and Brain Injury: Diagnosis and New Treatment Options ~ Carolyn D'Ambrosio, MD, MS ~Mass General Brigham and Harvard Medical School ~ Hypersomnia (sleepiness) is a common symptom in patients with brain injury. We will discuss the causes and treatment options for hypersomnia in brain injury including newer medications.

E. Hidden Pain: Cognitive-Communication Challenges in Pain Assessment after Stroke ~ Joanne Morello, PT, DPT, CSRS; Elizabeth Barbin, MS, CCC-SLP, CBIS ~ Northeast Rehabilitation Hospital Network~Pain is often referred to as the fifth vital sign. Healthcare providers rely on a patient's reported pain rating to let them know when they have pain, how bad the pain is, and if the treatment is helping to reduce the pain. People who have had a stroke may have cognitive or communication challenges that impact their reliable use of pain scales. In this session we'll review the evidence for accurate pain reporting after stroke. We'll introduce a selection of alternative pain scales, how to use them, and how we incorporated them into our clinical practice. Disclosure: Ms. Morello and Ms. Barbin are not being compensated for this presentation. Neither of them have relevant financial or non-relevant financial dislosures to make.

2:20 - 2:40 BREAK - VISIT EXHIBITORS

2:45 - 3:45 SESSION IV

A. Navigating Neurogenic Recovery: Optimizing the Continuum of Care ~ Collean Combs, MS, CCC-SLP; Amy Ramage, PhD~ UNH ~ Participants will explore the evolving roles of rehabilitation professionals, from hyperacute care to community re-integration, with a specific focus on identifying critical intervention points where speech-language pathology expertise can enhance patient outcomes. This presentation is designed for speech-language pathologists working in acute care, inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient settings, and community-based programs who wish to enhance their clinical descision making and demonstrate the value of speech-language pathology services across the entire spectrum of neurogenic care. Disclosure: Ms. Combs & Ms. Ramage are not being compensated for this presentation, and both have relevant financial disclosures to make.

B. Hold Me, Thrill Me, Stick Me, Chill Me: Approaches to Spasticity Management ~ Donald Tower, DO ~ Northeast Rehabilitation Hospital Network ~ Attendees will be able to understand the etiology and pathogenesis of spasticity, share the modalities utilized to manage spasticity and future directions for spasticity management.

C. No Workshop Presentation (see above notes on What is Brain Health & How Does it Relate to Neuroplasticity?)

D. Yoga Nidra Guided Meditation for Sleep & Emotional Well Being after Brain Injury ~ Ellie Spriet, OTD, OTR/L, CKTP, RYT200 ~ LoveYourBrain ~ This engaging workshop will offer education about how sleep and mental health are impacted after brain injury, and how yoga nidra guided meditation has been proven to help. Yoga nidra or 'yogic sleep' is a guided-relaxation technique that shifts brain waves from beta to alpha, theta, and eventually delta frequencies to achieve emotional balance, stress reduction, and restorative sleep. We will discuss a range of yoga nidra methods, including iRest, an evidence-based, 10-step practice that has been shown to improve sleep, PTS(D), chronic pain, and anxiety after TBI. Together we will explore a range of simple and effective practices to support yourself, patients, and their families in their healing journey.

E. Post Rehab Recovery: Activities and Resources for Ongoing Cognitive and Communication Skill Development ~ Gina England, MA, CCC-SLP, Speech Pathologist, Private Practice ~ The potential for additional recovery of cognitive and communication abilities can continue long after an individual's time in acute and sub-acute rehab has ended. This session will focus on specific activities and resources that are available in one's community that can help facilitate the ongoing recovery of cognitive-linguistic skills that have been impacted by a brain injury or stroke. The need for 24-hour supervision in the home will also be addressed with recommendations for a less-stressful experience for both survivors and caregivers. Ms. England is not being compensated for this presentation, and has no relevant financial but has relevant non-financial disclosure to make.

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS

Application has been made for the following CEU's and Continuing Education Credits:
ASHA, CCM, NASW, CDMSC, CCMC, CRCC

ASHA CE APPROVED PROVIDER

New Hampshire Speech, Language & Hearing Association

Intermediate Level

0.5 ASHA CEUs

Circle One:
RN SLP PT OT SW CDMSC CCMC CRCC Psych CBIS Other_____

The New Hampshire Speech-Language-Hearing Association is approved by the Continuing Education Board of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) to provide continuing education activities in speech-language pathology and audiology. See course information for number of ASHA CEUs, instructional level and content area. ASHA CE Provider approval does not imply endorsement of course content, specific products or clinical procedures.

This program is offered for up to 0.5 ASHA CEUs (Intermediate level; Professional area). ASHA CEUs are available for the Keynote session and sessions I-A, I-C, II-A, III-A, III-C, III-E, IV-A, and IV-E.

Psychologists: Will receive a Certificate of Attendance for 5 contact hours.
Social Workers: 5 CEUs pending approval from NASW NH
Nurses: Will receive a Certificate of Attendance for 5 contact hours.
All other healthcare and social service professionals: This program will provide 5 contact hours.

At the completion of this course, attendees will be required to fill out a short self-assessment/survey regarding the learner outcomes during the course(s) presented during today's conference in order to receive a certificate of attendance and/or be reported to ASHA CE

Conference Objectives: Participants will be able to identify advances in prevention, diagnostic assessment and rehabilitation, coping strategies, holistic approaches, recreation and leisure, and community support. They will also be able to identify ways to support collaboration and hope among participants, while developing a clearer vision of how we can better meet the needs of survivors and families in the community.

LOCATION: Courtyard by Marriott & Grappone Conference Center--70 Constitution Avenue-- Concord, New Hampshire (603) 225-0303.

DIRECTIONS & RESERVATION INFORMATION
From I-93 North or South: Take Exit 15 West. Turn right at the first stoplight onto Commercial Street and follow Commercial Street 1/4 mile to Constitution Avenue.

From 393 East - Follow 393 towards Concord, Turn right onto Commercial Street and follow around to Grappone Conference Center.

A block of rooms has been reserved for $139.00 (Single and Double Rate). You must reserve before **Tuesday, April 21, 2026,** to guarantee rate.

For Hotel reservations call 1-800-321-2211 and specify BIANH Brain Injury & Stroke Conference.
If you have any questions about this conference, please call BIANH at (603) 225-8400.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

ONLINE REGISTRATION PREFERRED - https://p2p.onecause.com/42bisc

If unable to register online, use conference registration form below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP _____

E-Mail _____ Phone_____ FAX_____

Organization _____ Address_____

Position _____ Phone _____ FAX _____

____BRAIN INJURY SURVIVOR $75.00 _____ FAMILY $130.00

_____ ALL OTHER (Professionals) $180.00

There are a limited number of survivor scholarships available, please email renee@bianh.org for more information.

If you cannot attend and someone is coming in your place, we need to be notified of the substitution no less than 48 hours prior to conference.

Please check back one week prior to the conference for any session handouts that may be posted at:
https://bianh.org/bi-conference-handouts

Please Check:

____Check Check #_____ Employer _____

All cancellations will incur a $25.00 processing fee. We cannot refund cancellations made after Friday, April 17, 2026

Please return this form and your check to: Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire
52 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

Diet Preferences/Restrictions: _____Vegetarian _____ Gluten Free _____Other:_____
(you must ask server for your meal) (please specify)

Do you have a physical impairment and need special seating in various rooms? ____ Yes ____No

If yes, please specify needs_____

WORKSHOP CHOICES

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

	First Choice	Second Choice
Session I	Track _____	Track _____
Session II	Track _____	Track _____
Session III	Track _____	Track _____
Session IV	Track _____	Track _____

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