



USBIA NEWS Winter 2018

**Board Member Spotlight:
Dr. Robert L. Karol**

Dr. Robert L. Karol has spent years working on behalf of people with brain injuries and their families and is enthused to have joined the USBIA Board of Trustees about a year ago. He is now Chairing its Governance Committee with an ambitious agenda of updating its procedural processes and facilitating the Board's membership recruitment.

He is most passionate about helping people advocate for services, funding, and legislation to improve the lives of people with disabilities. To this end he has started an outpatient adjustment



Dr. Robert L. Karol

program, an outpatient clinic, a brain injury hospital crisis program and a hospital neurobehavioral brain injury program, and a nursing home program to transition people out of nursing homes and into the community. He testified at the Minnesota state legislature for enhanced program funding and for brain injury prevention.

He serves as the senior member of the Minnesota Department of Human Services Brain Injury Advisory Committee (2017-18 Vice Chair/2018-19 Chair) promoting the needs of people with brain injury. Perhaps the effort that he is most proud of is co-founding the Minnesota Brain

injury Alliance, an outpatient clinic, a brain injury hospital crisis program and a hospital neurobehavioral brain injury program, and a nursing home

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March is Brain Injury Awareness Month!

In recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month in March, the United States Brain Injury Alliance is taking steps to increase awareness about brain injuries, including prevention, recognition, and response. USBIA is distributing comprehensive Brain Injury Awareness Month campaign materials, providing Alliance members with tools and resources to promote brain injury awareness in their community!

Soon to be available for complimentary download from the USBIA website, various web banners and graphics are being created for use on the internet, social media pages and other communication platforms. Also provided will be sample letters and customizable press materials for reaching out to local media outlets during the month of March.

USBIA is grateful to the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance for developing this comprehensive and impactful Awareness Month campaign for 2018!



**This March,
See me.
Understand my brain injury.**

This year's campaign promotes awareness by encouraging all those in the brain injury community to share their personal experiences with brain injury. Each time a person shares their brain injury story, it not only spreads awareness, it also raises the hopes of other people living with brain injury. A personal story can be the beacon in the dark for someone desperately trying to find another person who understands. Who has lived it. Who gets it.

That is why the United States Brain Injury Alliance wants to share personal stories in March of 2018 – Brain Injury Awareness Month. These stories can be about your own personal recovery, the moment of your injury or even your journey as a caretaker, spouse or parent. Brain injury touches so many lives and each life is made of these stories. If you would like to share a personal story with brain injury, we only ask that it be concise –no more than 500 words. We aren't looking for whole biographies; just those moments that make you go, "This is it. This is brain injury." They can be funny, sad, exciting – whatever brain injury means to you. Stories will be shared on social media in March of 2018. Brain Injury Awareness Month is about saying "See Me. Understand My Brain Injury." Help others see. Help others understand.

2017: USBIA's Year in Review

New Membership Category Announced in 2017

In 2017, USBIA created a new class of membership allowing all those with an interest in brain injury to join the Alliance as an Advocate Member. Advocate Members are part of a nation-wide community of advocates seeking to prevent brain injury and improve lives.

Persons with brain injury, family members, caregivers, and medical professionals are all encouraged to join as Advocate Members. Best of all, becoming an Advocate Member of USBIA is absolutely free! Simply visit our website, www.usbia.org, to join.

Already the response to this initiative has been excellent, and USBIA expects its Advocate Members to be a force for positive change in the future!

USBIA Moves Forward on Public Policy

2017 was an active year for USBIA on the Public Policy front. There are currently threats to a range of issues important to the brain injury community, including possible cuts to Medicaid, pre-existing condition assurances, coverage for essential benefits (including rehabilitation), as well as threats to the TBI Act and other core federal funding for brain injury services, surveillance, prevention and research. As a result of these concerns, the USBIA Executive Committee has hired a lobbyist to ensure USBIA and members of the Alliance are represented on Capitol Hill. The contract is with the Ridge Policy Group, a firm that has an excellent understanding of the legislative landscape as it pertains to brain injury.



On an on-going basis, USBIA's Public Policy Committee reviews and endorses legislation for the entire USBIA network and works with the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, chaired by Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr., of New Jersey and Todd Russell Platts of Pennsylvania, to support or oppose relevant legislation. Throughout the year, the Committee has sent out "Action Alerts" to Alliance members to mobilize critical advocacy on issues

important to the brain injury community.

Last but certainly not least, the United States Brain Injury Alliance was proud to participate in the Brain Injury Awareness Day on Capitol Hill held in Washington, DC, on March 22, 2017. USBIA joined other advocacy groups to share information on brain injury and prevention with legislators and staffers. USBIA thanks Congressional Brain Injury Task Force co-chairs Reps. Bill Pascrell, Jr. and Thomas J. Rooney for hosting this important annual event!

Highlights of the Year at a Glance!

2017 was an exciting year for the United States Brain Injury Alliance! We thank all those who worked to make the accomplishments listed below possible!

- Introduced new membership category to expand the reach of the Alliance across North America.
- Retained government relations firm to ensure USBIA's voice is heard on Capitol Hill.
- Increased Facebook likes by over 100%.
- Endorsed and exhibited at the World Congress on Brain Injury.
- Expanded participation in successful Webinar series.
- Provided travel scholarships to attend NASHIA meeting.
- Added new resources to the member library.
- Comprehensive review of by-laws initiated by Governance Committee.
- Distributed Brain Injury Awareness Month materials to all member states.
- Advocated for a range of Senate and House legislation.
- Provided states with administrative conference support.

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Injury Alliance and then serving on its Board for 14 years concluding as Chair of the Board of Directors. He has also served on the Board of Directors of a brain injury group home provider and on a TBI Model Systems Regional Advisory Council. He has advised, consulted, or served on committees for a brain injury vocational program, a chemical health program specialized for people with brain injury, multiple brain injury group homes, the Minnesota Department of Corrections, the Minnesota Psychological Association, the Supreme Court of Minnesota Board of Law Examiners Special Test Accommodation Panel, and a state affiliate of the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living.

Nationally he advocates for people with disabilities through his role as the American Psychological Association's Rehabilitation Division 22 Liaison to the American Psychological Association's Board of Professional Affairs and he serves on the Division 22 Practice Committee.

Professionally he is President of a group private practice, Karol Neuropsychological Services & Consulting, in Minneapolis, that specializes in program development consultation for organizations, workshops & staff training, counseling for persons with brain injury and other disabilities, neuropsychological and rehabilitation evaluations, and case consultation for providers, insurers, attorneys, etc.

Dr. Karol is Board Certified by the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) as a Rehabilitation Psychologist and is Certified by the

Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists (ACBIS) as a Certified Brain Injury Specialist Trainer (CBIST). He received the American Psychological Association Rehabilitation Division Lifetime Practice Excellence Award for "excellence in clinical practice and contributions to the field of rehabilitation psychology" and the Cifu Lecturer Award for "distinguished contributions to the field of brain injury" from the VCU School of Medicine. He is a member of the Minnesota Academy of Medicine.

Somewhere in the midst of his tireless professional and personal advocacy Dr. Karol has managed to author four books about brain injury (*Neuropsychosocial Intervention: The Practical Treatment of Severe Behavioral Dyscontrol After Acquired Brain Injury*; *Overcoming Grief and Loss after Brain Injury*; *Therapists' Guide to Grief and Loss after Brain Injury*; and *Behavior Plan Workbook: How to Conceptualize and Treat Behaviors after Brain Injury*) as well as four book chapters and various journal articles. He is a frequent plenary, breakout and workshop conference presenter and is an Adjunct Professor. He is currently preparing materials on brain injury for a provider of innovative on-line educational content.

Apart from professional activities he is an enthusiastic traveler, voracious reader -- participating in a book club, an avid photographer, and a life-long, unfortunately amateur, chess player. He collects dragons, magnets, and license plates. In his spare time, he is writing a play about brain injury.

The USBIA is excited to welcome Dr. Karol, a brain injury professional who has dedicated his entire career to supporting the brain injury community. His dedication and expertise will be a great asset to the team.

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OUR MISSION

The mission of the United States Brain Injury Alliance is to engage the community in preventing brain injuries and improving lives. We will accomplish this through awareness, prevention, advocacy, support, research, and community engagement.