



Nov. 1, 2007

### **Veterans with traumatic brain injuries the subject of telecast series**

The Idaho State University Institute of Rural Health will present free public presentations statewide on traumatic brain injury (TBI) in response to high numbers of military personnel coming home suffering such disabilities.

The six-week series -- "Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury" will be telecast throughout Idaho at selected sites from Nov. 1 through Dec. 13, including ISU-Boise, 12301 W. Explorer Drive, Room 156.

The telecast series will cover topics on model programs, long-term planning and program advocacy related to the treatment of TBI. The U.S. Department of Defense has already expressed an interest in this series and is considering using these presentations as part of a department wide training system.

More than 25,000 people are estimated to be living with a severe TBI in the state of Idaho. With ongoing warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, this number has been rising significantly. TBI is caused by a penetrating blow or jolt to the head that disrupts normal brain functioning. The severity of a TBI may range from mild to severe. Extreme cases result in extended periods of unconsciousness or amnesia.

"TBI is the signature wound for returning service personnel," says Spearman. "Long-term support for individuals and family members is the biggest need."

In today's warfare, many lives are being saved due to the advent and increased use of protective equipment such as helmets, body armor and reinforced vehicles. Yet, Spearman says, this also means that more soldiers are coming home with extensive TBI issues. This, in turn, requires more training and increased awareness for everyone affected by TBI including health care providers, state agency personnel, family members and the general public.

The schedule for the presentations is as follows:

- Nov. 1 – "The True Welcome Home" presented by Pat Rowe Kerr, state veterans ombudsman and director of Operation Outreach.
- Nov. 8 – "Heart of a Hero: A Soldiers Return After TBI" presented by retired Lt. Col. Mary Kelly, Transition Assistance Advisor for the Idaho National Guard; Katie Anderson, Brain Injury Program director at the Idaho Elks Rehabilitation Hospital; and returning serviceman DeWayne Mayer and his wife, Jeannette.

(more)

- Nov. 15 – “Returning Veterans and Their Families: What Every Family Member Should Know” presented by Sherry Stock, executive director of the Brain Injury Association of Oregon.
- Nov. 29 – “Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury: Current Issues” presented by Ariel J. Lang, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry at the University of California, and Dewleen Baker, M.D., associate professor of psychiatry at the University of California.
- Dec. 6 – “Cognitive Rehabilitation after Blast Injury and Polytrauma” presented by Don MacLennan of the Minneapolis Veteran’s Administration Medical Center.
- Dec. 13 – “Idaho’s Traumatic Brain Injury Virtual Program Center (TBI-VPC)” presented by Russ Spearman, project director of the ISU-IRH and Laura J. Tivis Ph.D., project manager of ISU-IRH.

All presentations will be from 10 a.m. to noon MST (9 to 11 a.m. PST) at the following locations:

- Pocatello: ISU campus, Eli M. Oboler Library, Room B-35
- Idaho Falls: ISU campus, ISU/UI Higher Education Facility, Room 208
- Boise: ISU campus, ISU Boise Center, 12301 W. Explorer Dr., Room 156
- Twin Falls: College of Southern Idaho, Evergreen Bldg, Suite B-40, Room C-89
- Lewiston: Lewis and Clark State College, Sam Glenn Complex, Room SG-50.
- Coeur d’ Alene: North Idaho College, North Idaho Center for Higher Education, Suite 128

Seating at each location is limited so preregistration is required. For more information about the telecast, or to make reservations visit the Telehealth Idaho Web site at <http://telida.isu.edu>.

For assistance with making reservations or for further information, contact Donna Parker at (208) 373-1769, Russell Spearman 208-373-1773 or [tbi@isu.edu](mailto:tbi@isu.edu).

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Boise media contact: Chris Gabettas, University Relations, ISU-Boise, 208-373-1806

