



For Immediate Release

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Prevention, key to avoiding traumatic brain injuries

Each year, over 11,000 people die of brain injuries in Canada and hundreds of these injuries are preventable. The **Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County** (BIAWE) wants to remind local residents that many injuries can be prevented.

"Each winter, we see the devastating effects of motor vehicle collisions that lead to injuries and fatalities involving our families, friends and neighbours. Any precaution we can take to help prevent long-lasting brain injuries is something we highly encourage," said Melanie Gardin, President of the Brain Injury Association of Windsor and Essex County.

"Properly preparing yourself and your vehicle is the best way to prevent crashes," said Gardin.

Although motor vehicle crashes are a serious problem all year round, a significant number of crashes occur during the winter months.

Every winter, drivers should take the following steps to reduce their chances of a crash:

- Monitor weather forecasts to avoid driving in bad weather
- Drive defensively by reducing speed and leaving more space between vehicles
- Prepare for obstacles on roadways, including pedestrians and wheelchair capable people
- Outfit vehicles with four matching winter tires and have a licensed mechanic do an annual inspection

"In addition to traumatic brain injuries occurring from car crashes, we are seeing an increase in the number of traumatic brain injuries resulting from sports injuries," says Gardin. "Anyone could sustain a brain injury from a simple slip and fall. Traumatic brain injuries could cripple a person for life or cause death. Brain injury awareness is necessary to prevent traumatic head injuries and reduce its adverse effects." Any form of traumatic brain injury, including mild brain injuries (also known as concussions), should not be overlooked. Health experts warn that even mild brain injuries could cause persistent neurological problems, leading to cognitive difficulties.

The BIAWE encourages everyone to wear a helmet while taking part in sporting and recreational activities all year round, especially during the winter months.

Given the increase in serious brain injuries resulting from participation in popular sports such as hockey, skating, skiing, and tobogganing, we felt it was time to ask our community to support our awareness campaign and encourage others to protect their families from these preventable injuries," says Gardin.



Some facts about brain injury:

- In Windsor and Essex County, there are 2,400 reported acquired brain injury cases each year.
- Brain injury is the leading killer and disabler of people under the age of 45.
- Every year in Canada, over 11,000 people die as a result of a traumatic brain injury.
- Each year, over 6,000 Canadians become permanently disabled after a traumatic brain injury.
- Each day 100 Canadians sustain traumatic brain injuries; 44 of those are Ontarians.
- Motor vehicle collisions account for over half of all acquired brain injuries.
- Every year in Canada, over 60 children die as a result from bicycle-related injuries – the majority from brain injury.
- Bicyclists wearing helmets reduce the risk of brain injury by 88 per cent.
- In Canada, the direct and indirect costs associated with traumatic brain injury are estimated at \$3 million annually.
- Families provide the majority of care for people with brain injuries.

The BIAWE is committed to maximizing the quality of life for individuals with a brain injury and assisting their family and friends. The BIAWE provides the following: peer and community support, information about available services, resources and programs, public awareness of the causes, impact and prevention of brain injury, and advocacy on behalf of those affected.

For more information about traumatic brain injuries or the Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County (BIAWE), visit our website at www.biawe.com or call the local office at 519-981-1329.

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