

## **Enhanced Advocacy Section of Website Offers Promise of Enhanced Advocacy**

By Tom Grady, Director of Advocacy & Public Affairs

In an effort to further empower grassroots advocates of the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, the advocacy section of our website now has additional features.

Now, people can learn which legislation the Association is monitoring, obtain copies of testimony delivered to various legislative committees, and view pictures of events run by one of the Association's most active committees, the Council for the Head Injured Community [CHIC]. Combined with current features of our website, advocates have more opportunity to advocate and participate in public affairs.

"Advocacy requires proactivity and in order to be proactive, advocates must have the tools they need to advocate," says John Tiene, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees for the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey. "The idea of our advocacy and public affairs division is to empower those we serve to advocate for themselves and for the benefit of the brain injury community," he added.

By visiting <http://bianj.org/advocacy> visitors can: learn how to join CHIC, one of the Association's most active committees charged with championing the needs and rights of people with brain injury; access current and past editions of Legislative & Advocacy Round-up, a quarterly e-newsletter filled with national and state policy information; register for our Legislative Network; plus define – and contact – their representatives in state and federal government.

"Through the Advocacy section, the brain injury community can become fully engaged in the political process," says Barbara Geiger-Parker, President & CEO of the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey. "Folks can register for our legislative network - through which they gain valuable information about policy issues related to brain injury - learn about legislation the association monitors, and how they may go about taking action."

The improved website offers an "Ask the Advocate" subsection through which the reader can ask the Director of Advocacy & Public Affairs a question about anything related to government and policy. "This empowers the brain injury community to learn about government so they may influence it," says Tiene.

The website also allows easy access to educating policymakers. By accessing the Legislative Network subsection, readers can register for this network which serves as a venue to educate state and federal lawmakers about public policy issues related to brain injury. Also, the Action Alerts subsection provides step-by-step directions people may take to be heard when legislation is being considered. This is where people can learn how to make a difference in advancing both state and federal legislation. Finally, the Tools for Advocacy subsection provides the reader with practical tips people with brain injury, their families, and caregivers can use to effectively advocate.

Visit the new and improved advocacy section of our website and learn how you can contribute to both fulfilling the mission and vision of the Brian Injury Association of New Jersey plus make a difference in the lives of people impacted by brain injury.