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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Press Conference Notice

March 2009 is Brain Injury Awareness Month!

Anchorage, Alaska –

March 2009 will mark the commencement of Brain Injury Awareness Month! The Alaska Brain Injury Network, Inc. will partner with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Providence Neuroscience Center, Alaska VA Health Systems, local nonprofits, the media and statewide communities to raise awareness of “the silent epidemic.” These statewide and community leaders will emphasize the impacts of traumatic brain injury among Alaskans, Alaska Natives and rural residents, and Alaska service members.

A Press Conference will be held: February 26, 2009 at 11:00am at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Office Building at 40000 Ambassador Drive, Anchorage.

Alaska Brain Injury Network will be joined by Anchorage Acting Mayor Matt Claman, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium CEO Don Kashevaroff and Senior Director of Community Health Division Tim Gilbert, Providence Neuroscience Center Director Christie Artuso, Representative from Senator Begich’s office Julie Hasquet, Alaska VA Health Systems Polytrauma and Neuropsychology Director Dr. Paul Dukarm, and Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Nancy Burke. These community leaders will be joined by survivors and family members of traumatic brain injury to answer questions about how brain injuries affect Alaska families, as well as how Alaskans can prevent TBI, identify the symptoms, and access TBI rehabilitation and community programs.

March Brain Injury Awareness activities will take place statewide. They include public forums on brain injury, trainings for providers, head injury support group meetings, and health fairs. These efforts will raise awareness that treatment works - brain injury rehabilitation leads to better outcomes.

Statistics: The Alaska’s Department of Health and Social Services show that traumatic brain injury is a leading cause of death and disability among children and young adults in the State of Alaska; an estimated 12,000 people in the State of Alaska have suffered a traumatic brain injury; approximately 800 people in the State of Alaska report traumatic brain injuries each year; the number of Alaskans with a traumatic brain injury is increasing significantly as military service members injured overseas return home to Alaska; 20 percent of traumatic brain injuries result in death; many people who suffer traumatic brain injuries live with permanent disabilities; most cases of traumatic brain injury are preventable; and the lack of public awareness is so vast that traumatic brain injury is known in the disability community as the nation's "silent epidemic"



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