



Utah Improves Data Collection & Documentation



NATIONAL CENTER FOR INJURY PREVENTION AND CONTROL

SUCCESS STORIES

"Through this data collection, we can increase awareness of TBI signs and symptoms and help connect people to appropriate resources and care. Accurate diagnoses, proper management, and more information can help lead to a reduction in TBI symptoms and potential long-term effects."

Trisha Keller, Program Manager

Summary

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a serious public health problem in the United States, contributing to an ample number of deaths and cases of permanent disability. Precise and complete data on TBI is critical for informing programmatic activities to improve prevention efforts with the goal of helping all individuals live to their full potential. With support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC), Core State Injury Program, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is working with hospitals and trauma care centers to better document and collect data about TBI. UDOH is also creating partnerships to help streamline and ensure accuracy of External Cause of Injury Codes (E-codes) used in general medical billing and documentation.

Challenge

Trained certified data abstractors collect TBI data by reviewing hospital discharge and vital records data and obtaining hospital records. This process involves collecting and inputting data on the cause, intent, and location of the injury using the E-Code system, removing personal identifiers, and sending this information to CDC's Injury Center. After careful review, UDOH found many instances in which the cause of the TBI was recorded incorrectly. These errors resulted in incomplete records—missing or incorrect E-Codes and inaccurate data—that affect billing and diagnoses.

Target Audience

The target audiences of this effort were health care providers and hospital staff—specifically, those responsible for coding.



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

To improve documenting TBI

- Provide guidance and support to hospital and trauma center staff on accurate billing when needed, not just information about E-Codes; and
- Be consistent in outreach efforts and fulfilling commitments

Solution

When UDOH found missing data in their records they took action by reaching out to local hospitals and trauma centers to build strong relationships with department managers to train staff so that E-Codes would be documented correctly. These relationships allowed UDOH to streamline the E-Coding process for documenting TBI, as well as other injuries, by teaching a consistent method for data capture. This provided a valuable asset to hospital departments and trauma centers alike. Correctly documenting TBI allows UDOH to use more accurate statistical information to better target interventions and provide key information to partners, such as the Brain Injury Association and legislative coalitions.

Success

The collaboration between UDOH and local area hospitals has led to other projects and support, including:

- Establishment of a TBI fund, allowing Utah residents who have survived TBI access to the services and support they need,
- Sponsorships of brain injury conferences to help bring key partners and experts together, and
- Development of educational materials for the general public, which contain information and resources on TBI-related symptoms and where to go for support.

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