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NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed Executive Order 84, creating the New Jersey Advisory Council on Traumatic Brain Injury within the Department of Human Services.

"Traumatic brain injury has been identified as the leading cause of death and disability among children and young adults in this country," Gov. Whitman said. "I am hopeful that through the council we will be able to improve the quality of life for those who suffer from traumatic brain injury and for their families by recommending improvements in treatment and services as well as better ways to coordinate services between public and private service providers," the Governor said.

The Council will be composed of 18 public members, all of whom shall be appointed by the Governor. The membership will include eight individuals who are survivors of traumatic brain injury or the family members of such individuals. The council will also include one individual from each of the following groups: public or private health related organizations, disability or advisory planning groups within the State, the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, injury control programs at the State or local level, and the Center for Health Statistics for data research purposes.

The Commissioners of the Departments of Human Services, Education, Health and Senior Services, Community Affairs, Labor, Banking and Insurance, Law and Public Safety, Treasury and/or their designees, shall also serve on the Council. The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services or his designee will chair the Council.

The Executive Order provides that the initial terms of the public members shall be staggered with six members serving for a term of one year, six members serving for a term of two years and six members serving for three years. Thereafter, members shall serve for terms of three years.

The Executive Order specifies that the Council's responsibilities will be to:

- Advise and make recommendations to the Department of Human Services and other related State agencies on ways to improve services regarding traumatic brain injury, including the coordination of services between public and private entities.
- Encourage citizen participation through the establishment of public hearings and other types of community outreach and prevention.
- Encourage and stimulate research and prevention activities.
- Oversee any programs created under the federal Traumatic Brain Injury Act and any successive amendments to the act, and report to the federal government regarding such programs.