

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Brain injury community calls on federal government to say “yes” to a National Strategy for Brain Injury**

**Victoria** – Abbotsford resident Shirley Wilson is starting the new year on a journey without her son, Jacob. Jacob suffered a traumatic brain injury that eventually led to his death by toxic drug poisoning in 2021.

Shirley Wilson is now part of a growing grassroots movement committed to enhancing care and supports for brain injury patients and their families.

“Coordinated brain injury care and supports are desperately needed, and a national strategy is necessary,” says Shirley.

Shirley has joined the [125 Days to Say Yes Campaign](#) to improve care and support for people with brain injuries by calling on the federal government to implement a national strategy for brain injury.

From January to December 2024, brain injury survivors, family members, caregivers, brain injury associations, researchers and other stakeholders will be sending letters to the federal Minister of Health and other members of parliament asking for a national strategy for brain injury. The 125 days represents the 125 days the House of Commons is scheduled to sit this year.

“The current state of brain injury services and supports across the country is fragmented and chronically underfunded,” says Janelle Breese Biagioni, CEO of the CGB Centre for Traumatic Life Losses and Community Lead with the [B.C. Consensus on Brain Injury](#). “Even though provinces are meeting health care criteria, there is no coordinated brain injury strategy.”

A national strategy is already on the federal government’s radar. On June 2, 2022, in consultation with the CGB Centre for Traumatic Life Losses, Cowichan Brain Injury Society, Brain Injury Canada and associations Canada-wide, Alistair MacGregor, MP for Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, introduced private members [Bill C-277](#) to establish a national strategy for brain injury in Canada.

In part, Bill C-277 states that *“The Minister of Health must, in consultation with representatives of the provincial governments responsible for health, Indigenous groups and relevant stakeholders, develop a national strategy to support and improve brain injury awareness, prevention and treatment as well as the rehabilitation and recovery of persons living with a brain injury.”*

“From concussion to stroke to severe traumatic brain injuries, the chronic nature of many brain injuries is often the root cause of challenges such as mental health, addictions, unemployment and homelessness.” says Michelle McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Brain Injury Canada. “A national strategy will help to improve awareness, prevention and treatment as well as the rehabilitation and recovery outcomes of individuals and families living with the effects of brain injury.”

Researchers believe a national strategy will increase awareness and education around brain injury, as well as reduce the stigma that comes with it. “We’ve heard from people who have brain injuries from toxic drug poisonings, from intimate partner violence and through other trauma, and in many cases, their injuries are underdiagnosed or undiagnosed,” Dr. Mauricio Garcia-Barrera, Associate Professor at UVic and Principal Investigator on the BC Consensus on Brain Injury. Another researcher with the project, Cole Kennedy, is working with Dr. Garcia Barrera to compile evidence on innovative brain injury treatments into an interactive tool that can be used to inform healthcare policy making and improve clinical care.

“Jacob struggled to find the right care after his brain injury,” says Shirley Wilson. “I’m embarking on this journey on his behalf and for all other brain injury survivors and their families. Please join me. Together, we can make a difference.”

### **Get Involved**

Be a voice for change! Join the movement for a national strategy for brain injury by sending letters to policy makers, contributing to the call for improved awareness, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation for individuals and families impacted by brain injuries. Downloadable resources can be found on the [125 Days to Say Yes Campaign](#) website.

### **Learn More**

[BC Consensus on Brain Injury](#) – Research study *on the intersections of Brain Injury, Mental Health, & Addictions (UVic, UBC, CGB Centre Initiative)*

[Brain Injury Canada](#)

<https://www.brainstreams.ca/news-articles/invitation-to-survivors-family-members-and-caregivers/>

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