



2010

Meeting of Minds

Tampa, Fl, June 25-27

WIIGs

4 Gold Star representatives
7 Wounded representatives

OUTCOMES

F. Family received a service dog.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Cut the red tape – dealing with PEB, retirement, VA paperwork more difficult for those with TBI.
2. VA RX Mail Drugs works.
3. TBI patients barely remember the contacts they made with Washington Officials while hospitalized.
4. TBI injuries hidden for the most part – creates societal challenges as well as challenges within the medical system where adaptations and concessions are as necessary as they would be for amputees or blind service members.
5. Families need to give wounded “space”.
6. More use of hyperbaric chambers for TBI – worthy of further investigation - positive feedback being circulated, longevity and stability of gains over time questioned, possible hazards of oxidization of copper or heavy metal from decomposing metal fragments inquired.
7. Some Vets had excellent service from Tampa VA for TBI.
8. TBI families are not included in the resource chain and global opportunities for wounded warriors as readily as amputees.
9. Over prescription of meds – pain killers – especially leaving Walter Reed and Bethesda with no plan of action given to wean.
10. PTSD shot being used at WR/NNMC: Stellate Ganglion Block – more information needed-

some positive affects for veterans reported.

11. Sports Games great: Ride to Recovery, Para Olympics –TBI families are not included as readily as amputees – opportunities obscure, but desired.
12. Compass Program Great – Give more exposure to TBI patients.
13. Gold Star Families - talking to others with similar experience really helps.
14. Survivor benefits for children felt to be extraordinarily taxed. One family quoted 26%.
15. Children not enrolled in benefits (ie. Dental) before death, are ineligible after [death. ie...](#) in-utero child would not be eligible for benefits because not in DEERS at time of death.
16. Gold Star wives receive education through the VA, therefore Gold Star families thought military should be able to choose who receives educational benefits (biological family members -brothers, sisters, moms,etc.).
17. Expand Operation “Proper Exit” – offer to Gold Star Mothers.
18. Improve Notification of Families – Casualty Assistance for both KIA and WIA – horror stories of WIA notification left on answering machine message.
19. Award of Purple Hearts – currently same award given whether KIA or WIA. Wounded visiting Gold Star families expressed discomfort receiving same Purple Heart when one resulted in death. Suggested 2 levels – something to set apart Purple heart for KIAs
20. More Peer Visitor Training needed– especially TBI.
21. Disney Vacations for veterans – free rooms for vacations and Purple Heart Vacation Houses are available.