



# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 14, 2012**

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## **WORKSHOP ON BRAIN INJURIES IN JUVENILE OFFENDERS**

*Experts from five states to share information*

**(RICHMOND, Va.)** — The Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services led a two-day workshop to explore and share information about identification and screening of brain injury in youths incarcerated in the juvenile justice system.

DRS and the Brain Injury Association of Virginia hosted the Virginia Collaborative Policy Summit on Brain Injury and Juvenile Justice, which brought together researchers, state agency stakeholders and advocacy professionals from several states studying this population, including Virginia, Texas, Nebraska, Utah and Minnesota. The workshop was held June 13-14.

“We have been looking at how brain injury may be a factor for so many youth in our correctional systems,” said DRS Commissioner Jim Rothrock. “This summit provided an opportunity for experts from our Commonwealth and the other four states to share best practices. With this information we hope to better diagnose core problems and then treat accordingly.”

Participants discussed each state’s policies and practices as well as challenges for identification, diagnosis and treatment.

The workshop is part of DRS’ a four-year federal grant on traumatic brain injury from the Health Resources and Services Administration. As part of the grant, DRS also partners with the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Trust Fund, which funds research by the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center’s Traumatic Brain Injury Model System to work with the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice to improve the process for identifying brain injury among youths incarcerated in the juvenile justice system.

“We have found more indices of underlying brain injury than we expected,” said William Brock, treatment director at the state’s DJJ. “This event will help us determine the best way to proceed.”

The grant’s goal is to develop a systematic, empirically-based process for reliably identifying brain injury among juvenile offenders, staff training programs, and effective intervention strategies and techniques.

At the workshop, Del. James M. Scott was presented with the 2012 Virginia DRS Brain Injury Champion Award for his years of commitment and dedication to Virginia youth with brain injuries.

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The Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services provides and advocates for the highest quality of services to help persons with disabilities maximize their employment, independence, and full inclusion into society. Through its four regional offices, 35 field offices, and various partnerships within the private and public sector, DRS assists more than 30,000 consumers annually with services including vocational counseling, career exploration, training, assistive technology and other specialized programs that cater to individual needs. For more information, visit [www.vadrs.org](http://www.vadrs.org).