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One of Ontario's Most Overlooked Health Issues Is Getting a Flag This June

TORONTO, June 1, 2026 —For one Ontario family, everything changed when their two-year-old son was struck by a car and sustained a severe, life-altering brain injury.

His mother cared for him for nearly three decades, navigating a system that often did not fully recognize or understand what brain injury meant for his daily life. Through that journey, she saw how easily people living with brain injury are misunderstood, overlooked, or not taken seriously.

After her son's passing, she chose to turn that experience into action.

Working with the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) and community brain injury associations across the province, she supported a provincial effort to raise flags during Brain Injury Awareness Month, so that brain injury would be more widely recognized and understood.

This June, that vision is being carried forward.

Across Ontario, flags will be raised in communities large and small to call attention to one of the most overlooked health issues.

More than half a million Ontarians are living with the effects of brain injury, and over 170,000 people sustain a concussion each year. Yet it remains widely misunderstood.

"In many ways, brain injury is invisible," says Ruth Wilcock, Chief Executive Officer of OBIA. "As a result, its impact is often misunderstood. People may look fine, yet struggle every day with memory, fatigue, changes in mood and behaviour, and the ability to work or participate fully in life."

That lack of recognition has real consequences.

When brain injury is not identified or understood, people often do not receive the care, accommodations, or support they need. Many struggle to maintain employment, relationships, and housing. Some fall into poverty. Others experience homelessness or become involved in the justice system, without anyone recognizing that a brain injury may be a contributing factor.

"Awareness has improved, particularly around concussion, but understanding has not kept pace," Wilcock adds. "Too many people are still left without answers, without support, and without a clear path forward."

The flag-raising initiative is intended to change that by creating visibility, prompting conversation, and encouraging communities across Ontario to better recognize and respond to brain injury.

The goal is simple, but important: to ensure that people living with a brain injury are seen, understood, and supported.

"Awareness matters because it shapes how people respond," says Wilcock. "When brain injury is better understood, people are more likely to receive the support, patience, and care they need, and less likely to fall through the cracks."

Throughout June, OBIA and its partners will continue to encourage municipalities and organizations to take part in the flag-raising initiative and to recognize Brain Injury Awareness Month.