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**ALOHA TORONTO- THE BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
HOSTS TORONTO'S 7TH ANNUAL HAWAIIAN OYSTER ODYSSEY
Media personalities, survivors and Ontario Transportation Minister to headline**

(TORONTO - JANUARY 12, 2011) - It's time to chuck your winter gear and grab grass skirts and Hawaiian shirts. There are only days left before a winter warm-up is set to take place at Toronto's historic Miller Tavern at 3885 Yonge St. The Brain Injury Association of Canada's (BIAC) premier fundraising event, the Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey (HOO) is set for January 24th from 6 to 9 pm.

For the 7th year running, this Hawaiian-themed event will be jam-packed with oodles of oysters, mystery prizes, fancy tropical cocktails and stories from brain injury survivors and plenty of mingling with medical experts, community leaders, public figures, business professionals and the media.

"Brain injury is Canada's leading cause of death and disability for Canadians under 45," said Larry Carlson, BIAC president and the first survivor of a brain injury to ever hold the post. "The Hawaiian Oyster Odysseys are our main source of funding to spread our message," he said. Carlson will be a special guest at the Toronto event.

Some other highlights:

- Back by popular demand is the evening's host, CTV Canada AM host Beverly Thomson.
- Special guests include Jim McKenny, former Toronto Maple Leaf and CITY-TV sportscaster, Maclean's magazine columnist Andrew Coyne and Hon. Kathleen Wynne MPP, Ontario's Minister of Transportation.
- Brad Cownden, a University of Victoria student will speak about his summer 2010 solo bicycle trip across Canada that raised money and awareness for brain injury.
- Toronto brain injury survivor Rob Ashe will give insight into his personal experiences.
- An exciting announcement from the Brain Injury Association of Canada and Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation is also set for the Toronto event, as plans for national brain injury research initiatives are currently in the works.

HOO fundraisers started in Toronto in 2005 and are held annually in cities across Canada including Ottawa, Montreal, Edmonton, Saskatoon, St. John's, Charlottetown and Vancouver. They are organized by BIAC, in partnership with other brain injury organizations and made possible purely through volunteer efforts. The first event raised \$30,000 and over \$750,000 has been raised over the last five years from HOOs across Canada. Proceeds from the event go directly to BIAC and local associations to raise awareness of brain injuries.

The National presenting sponsor is the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Other sponsors include: TD Bank Financial Group, We Care Home Health Services and Air Canada who donates a pair of Airline tickets to Hawaii nationally. Local sponsors include the Posluns Family Foundation, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Goodmans Law Firm, Stem Cell Canada, Alpha Laboratories and CTV.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.hawaiianoysterodysseys.ca/ for \$200/person or \$150/person before January 17.

For further information, contact Howard Brown at 416-844-1180 or howard@brown-cohen.com.
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Brain Injury Association of Canada, 155 Queen Street, Suite 808, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L1 Phone: 613-762-1222 | Toll Free: 1-866-977-2492 | Fax: 613-236-5208 E-mail: info@biac-aclc