

MBA hosts press conference for marathon survivors



Marathon bombing victim Dr. Scott Weisberg, spoke about his own hearing loss and brain injury on June 20 at the MBA.

PHOTO BY JASON SCALLY

The Massachusetts Bar Association hosted a press conference on June 20 on behalf of a group of Boston Marathon bombing survivors seeking a meaningful award from the One Fund Boston after sustaining hearing loss and traumatic brain injury (TBI) more than a year ago. The event, moderated by **MBA President Douglas K. Sheff**, included survivors, TBI experts and representatives from the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA).

The press conference came in response to the One Fund's call for public comment on the draft protocol for the second distribution of nearly \$20 million in charitable funds. The MBA issued a formal statement on the protocol and submitted a letter to the One Fund from Sheff.

The *Boston Globe* also published a letter to the editor co-written by Sheff and Paul White, chairman of the MBA's Marathon Bombing Victims Assistance Program Boston, which addressed comments made by a One Fund spokeswoman who, in an earlier *Boston Globe* article, accused the marathon survivors' volunteer attorneys of improperly taking advantage of the outpouring of support for their own gain. The "Un-charitable view of Marathon survivors' attorneys is unfair" letter ran in the June 26 *Boston Globe*.

In addition, on June 27, The One Fund released its Final Protocol for the second distribution of funds. The MBA released the following statement:

The One Fund's Final Protocol for the second distribution of charitable funds is a welcome advancement for survivors of the Boston Marathon bombings who suffered traumatic brain injury (TBI), hearing loss and other invisible injuries. We are grateful that the One Fund appears to have listened to our concerns and crafted its protocol to be more inclusive of all survivors, including those with invisible injuries who are now more expressly eligible for cash gifts in addition to programmatic support. We are eager to see what meaningful impact the final distribution has for these survivors, and hope that the Final Protocol leads to more equitable awards for all. As we did during the first One Fund distribution, the Massachusetts Bar Association will again provide volunteer lawyers to assist survivors free of charge with their questions and legal needs related to this new application process.