

POLYTRAUMA NETWORK SITE



ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

***VETERAN AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA***

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Welcome to the Richmond Polytrauma Network Site (PNS). The PNS will do all that we can to make your visit as positive and successful as possible. The PNS philosophy is to work together to maximize function, preserve dignity, and provide support. We have prepared this information booklet to answer questions you may have about the clinic. If you have any other questions, our staff will be glad to help you.

Sincerely,

*A. Hudak, MD
Medical Director
Polytrauma Network Site Clinic*

About Richmond PNS

SECTION 1

Description of Services

The PNS team provides an interdisciplinary outpatient program that is customized to address the needs of each patient. Patient performance is discussed during interdisciplinary team rounds.

- Rehabilitation attempts to promote healing and function by facilitating the body's own healing process.
- The goal of treatment is to increase patient function while keeping physical and thinking impairments from becoming lifelong disabilities. Patients and families/caregivers work with a team of rehabilitation professionals to set and meet goals.
- The PNS provides specific evaluation, outpatient rehabilitation, mental health support and vocational therapy tailored to individual injuries sustained by trauma or disease.
- The PNS team also manages associated medical and surgical conditions through consultation with other specialties as needed.
- Patient achievements are individual and depend on many factors including the medical/surgical issues involved, as well as the severity of the initial trauma or injury.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE PNS REHABILITATION PROGRAM?

The goal of PNS Clinic is to help you care for yourself, become a part of your community, and be successful in your professional and scholastic endeavors.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

- to be treated with dignity and respect
- to be supported in your personal rehabilitation goals
- to be updated on a regular basis on your progress

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

- to attend sessions to focus on adjustment and coping with injury
- to help set long & short-term rehabilitation goals
- to actively participate in therapy as scheduled
- to complete assignments given in therapy
- to do your best to meet set goals

Commonly asked questions

❖ Why am I here?

Your referring provider felt you would benefit from services found within PNS. You are here to learn how to become as independent as possible in your daily life.

❖ Will rehabilitation work?

Rehabilitation is a very personalized process. Much depends upon your physical condition, your limitations, and how much effort you put into therapy.

❖ Will I be normal again?

Normal means different things to different people. The goal of rehabilitation is to help you become as independent as possible.

❖ How long will I be here?

Therapy sessions typically can last from 30 to 50 minutes. The duration of your therapy treatment will vary based upon your needs and progress. You should wear comfortable clothing and sturdy shoes.

❖ When will I see my doctor?

You will see the doctor during the initial evaluation and for subsequent follow up appointments at intervals determined by your needs.

❖ What is IDT conference?

IDT stands for interdisciplinary team. IDT conference or meeting describes the meeting during which your treatment team comes together to discuss your progress and potential barriers. At times, patients and their family or caregivers, may be invited to attend a treatment team meeting.

GENERAL PNS "HOUSE RULES"

There is no smoking in the medical center. Smoking shelters are provided on the grounds. Please do not enter the kitchen area or remove food from the counter.

Section 2

INFORMATION FOR FAMILY / CAREGIVERS

Families and/or significant others play an *important* role in the rehabilitation process of a loved one with disabilities. As an extension of the health care team, family support and encouragement is vital in helping the rehabilitation patient to achieve his/her goal to function as independently as possible! Along with this support, families have *responsibilities* as well. These include:

- Allowing the patient to participate in therapy without distraction. Therapy is intense and requires concentration – therefore, the rehab team may give you specific directions on helping or “not helping” in therapy, depending on what is best for your loved one.
- If there are multiple family members or significant others, we ask that one person be selected to share information back to the group. This keeps lines of communication open and prevents misinformation from occurring.
- During the rehabilitation process, the family may be invited to some patient / team conferences. This conference promotes interaction between the entire healthcare team and the patient and his or her family. The nurse case manager or social worker will contact the family to arrange date and time.

We can't emphasize the *importance of family* enough in the recovery and return of the service person or veteran to the community. Retraining and relearning activities of daily living here at the PNS helps them to become as independent as possible, to preserve his/her dignity, and to promote self-esteem. It also allows him/her to become an active, productive member of the family.

Section 3

THE REHABILITATION TEAM

PNS INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEMBERS

PHYSIATRIST

- Medical physician who leads the rehabilitation team.
- Works with you to plan appropriate rehabilitation treatment, as well as medication, and/or referrals to other providers as necessary.

PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

- Specialize in understanding how an injury or medical problem affects your brain and your ability to function.
- Provide neuropsychological assessment which involves measuring cognitive skills such as attention, memory, problem-solving, and emotional functioning.

- Help the team and your family understand the best ways to treat your injury and predict your future level of function.
- Provide individual psychotherapy to address issues surrounding adjustment to chronic and traumatic injuries, as well as many other issues salient to the veteran population, such as PTSD, Depression, relationship issues, bereavement/grief, and adjustment from military life.
- Provide some general psychological services to assist your family in coping with and adjusting to your chronic and traumatic injuries.

NURSE CASE MANAGER/NURSE EDUCATOR

- Serves as a point of contact for veterans
- Provides medical support and guidance
- Provides quality nursing care, helps you to set and achieve rehab goals, and encourages independence.
- Actively involved in teaching you and your family about your illness and how to manage your disabilities.
- Help you and your family to develop problem-solving skills to overcome obstacles you may face at home.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICE/CASE MANAGEMENT

PNS has two licensed social workers that assist with patient care needs.

- Conduct a Comprehensive Psychosocial Assessment to assess your bio-psycho-social needs or issues.
- Available to help you and your family to evaluate social, financial, emotional, and overall support needs to ensure a successful discharge plan.
- Assist you and your family to help you function successfully and provide psycho-education on caregiver support services.
- Assist you with community and VA referrals, coping and adjustment counseling, and general support.

PHYSICAL THERAPY AND KINESIOTHERAPY

PNS has both a physical therapist (PT) and a kinesiotherapist (KT) both of whom work on movement, lower extremity dysfunction, and conditioning.

- Treat and assess physical impairments related to your illness.
- Design a treatment plan to help you overcome a disability and help you to function more independently
- Work to improve your strength, balance, and ability to walk at home and out in the community.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

PNS has an occupational therapist.

- Provide treatment designed to improve independence and safety in activities of

daily living, to include functional cognition

- Daily living skills include, but are not limited to, activities such as grooming, dressing, money management, medication management, household and yard management and grocery shopping
- Address cognitive deficits like memory problems, poor judgment and decreased problem-solving to increase independence in a wide variety of environments (clinic, home, work, and community)

SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

- Assess and treat communication and cognitive impairments such as decreased attention and concentration, memory, problem solving, and organization, to increase safety and independence
- Develop individualized treatment plans based on deficits and your overall goal
- Provide education and training to you and your family on various compensatory strategies and cognitive devices, as needed, to facilitate successful transition into the community and increase your independence

RECREATIONAL THERAPY

- Facilitate reintegration into your community and development of a healthy, satisfying leisure lifestyle
- Develop or adapt leisure skills, to eliminate barriers, and promote health and wellness
- Improve functioning and independence with leisure activities.
- Provide awareness and understanding regarding the importance of leisure and being involved in recreation opportunities.
- Provide community reintegration training through individual and/or group therapeutic community experiences.
- Sessions are implemented individually, in a group setting, in a community setting or via telehealth.

BLIND REHABILITATION OUTPATIENT SPECIALIST

- Perform a wide array of vision services including assessments and visual skills
- Provide education and training to family members and caregivers

COMPENSTATED WORK THERAPY

- Services may include, but are not limited to: vocational/career counseling, assessment, work readiness/evaluation, education/training discussion, career planning, vocational objective/goals discussion, job exploration, job/career transi-

tion/scope, job development, job carving, reasonable accommodations discussion, disability incomes discussions and planning, worksite analysis' and preparation on improving marketability.

- While in duration of PNS program-provide on-going vocational support to achieve successful integration into the workforce and maintain an improved work-life balance. Or transition out of the workforce if necessary towards disability planning.
- Collaboration with immediate treatment members in successful achievement of vocational goals.

PATIENT RIGHTS

We view ourselves as a team with you, our partner, as a vital component.

We request that you observe and be guided by the following patient rights and responsibilities so we can work together.

The following is a summary of your rights as a patient at the Richmond VAMC Polytrauma Network Site.

Please talk with VA treatment team members or a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights.

I. Respect and Nondiscrimination

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Your privacy will be protected. You will receive care in a safe environment. We will seek to honor your personal and religious values.
- You have the right to communicate freely and privately. You may have or refuse visitors. You will have access to public telephones. You may participate in civic rights.
- In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients and staff, you are asked to respect other patients and staff and to follow the facility's rules. Avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

II. Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

- You will be given information about the health benefits that you can receive. The information will be provided in a way you can understand.
- You will receive information about the costs of your care, if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying for your portion of the costs associated with your care.

- Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless authorized by law (i.e., State public health reporting). You have the right to information in your medical record and may request a copy of your records. This will be provided except in rare situations where your VA physician feels the information will be harmful to you. In that situation, you have the right to have this discussed with you by your VA provider.
- You will be informed of all outcomes of care, including any injuries caused by your medical care. You will be informed about how to request compensation for injuries.

III. Participation in Treatment Decisions

- You, and any persons you choose, will be involved in decisions about your care. You will be given information you can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse treatment. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you have the responsibility to understand the possible results to your health. If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan, you have a responsibility to notify your treatment team.
- You will be given, in writing, the name and professional title of the provider in charge of your care. As a partner in the health care process, you have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient. This includes your participation in decision-making and care at the end of life.
- Tell your provider about your current condition, medicines (including over the counter and herbals) and medical history. Also, share any other information that affects your health. You should ask questions when you don't understand something about your care. This will help in providing you the best care possible.
- You have the right to have your pain assessed and to receive treatment to manage your pain. You and your treatment team will develop a pain management plan together. You are expected to help the treatment team by telling them if you have pain and if the treatment is working.
- You have the right to choose whether or not you will participate in any research project. Any research will be clearly identified. Potential risks of the research will be identified and there will be no pressure on you to participate.
- You will be included in resolving any ethical issues about your care. You may consult with the Medical Center's Ethics Committee and/or other staff knowledgeable about health care ethics.
- If you or the Medical Center believes that you have been neglected, abused, or exploited, you will receive help.

IV. Complaints

- You are encouraged and expected to seek help from your treatment team and/or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process available to you. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.