

Military TBI Case Management Quarterly Newsletter

TBI Case Management Community of Interest

Special Edition: Excellence in TBI Case Management



CAPT Cynthia A. Spells

Case managers and care coordinators are essential in ensuring our service members and veterans diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI) receive the best of care when receiving treatment for their TBI and other co-occurring conditions. They manage and coordinate the services of multiple health care providers and offer additional resources from the time of injury through acute care and on to rehabilitation and reintegration.

On behalf of Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC), I am pleased to recognize 22 of these key partners who have been nominated by their colleagues for excellence in TBI case management. These outstanding case managers and care coordinators in the military and veterans health care systems are featured in this special newsletter edition. They were selected based on innovation and high performance that contribute to the advancement of case management practice(s) supporting wounded warriors with TBI. Examples include: developing and implementing TBI or other program improvements with demonstrated positive outcomes measures; identifying and securing hard-to-find services and resources, going “above and beyond” for wounded warriors; providing case management services in new or innovative ways to reach those in remote areas and facilitate their care needs; and improving the TBI case management program either at a site or overall through the military or veterans health care systems.

The narratives shared in this newsletter illustrate the diversity of services that TBI case managers and care coordinators provide but have one important element in common: the providers demonstrate a profound commitment to supporting service members, veterans and families affected by traumatic brain injury. Join me in congratulating them on their success in fulfilling a critical role in TBI care and in thanking their colleagues for nominating them and sharing these inspiring narratives.

Capt. Cynthia A. Spells, Acting Director, Clinical Affairs Division
Chief, TBI Recovery Support Program
Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

About the Quarterly Newsletter

The Military TBI Case Management Quarterly Newsletter is published by the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC), the traumatic brain injury (TBI) operational component of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. The newsletter is intended for providers who support warriors with TBI and their families. The newsletter is a forum to share ideas, best practices and resources among the TBI case management community. Comments and content suggestions for future editions of the newsletter and subscription updates may be sent to Mary Ellen Knuti, editor, at MaryEllen.Knuti.ctr@mail.mil



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In the words of colleagues who nominated TBI case managers and care coordinators, the following narratives provide snapshots of the variety and quality of services offered.



Lisa Caya, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program (PTRP) Clinical Social Worker, Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital, San Antonio, Texas

“As the sole social worker at our Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program (PTRP), Ms. Lisa Caya is a force to be reckoned with, in a superb kind of way. Words cannot express the energy, compassion, and conviction she displays. She has been a motivating force as she identifies numerous process improvement opportunities at the PTRP. She developed, implemented and facilitates an admissions committee

where she reviews patient records, arranges tours and interviews and manages/coordinates admission dates. She runs a patient milieu group where she follows up on all recommendations made, and she advocates for appropriate changes on the patients' behalf.

Ms. Caya runs all family meetings, which entails creating an environment conducive to hearing and discussing difficult information, identifying patient goals, monitoring the progress made, promoting family involvement in meetings and ensuring their participation in all therapeutic and educational opportunities. Ms. Caya serves as the "go-to-provider" of choice. She is often singled out by the multidisciplinary team, patients and families for those difficult responsibilities, tasks and issues that others are uncomfortable addressing. Examples of this are often observed, but are really noticed when she works with patients and/or their families who are in distress. Her genuine, warm, and empathetic nature immediately put her patients and their families at ease in their time of need. She constantly and consistently serves as a patient advocate and respectfully stands up to hospital administration to make changes, while she improves care for her patients.

Not only is Ms. Caya professional and courteous, she creates an environment that fosters respect, integrity and fairness. She demonstrates VA values and is committed to the PTRP mission. She provides an environment where all voices are heard respectfully and all individuals are able to participate to their full capability in performing work responsibilities. Ms. Caya exercises great judgment and carries out independent actions within limits of authority and responsibility; seeks additional responsibilities; voluntarily starts projects; and is self-starting and proactive. She identifies areas of process improvement and shares and provides relevant, timely and accurate information, expressing ideas clearly in written and oral form.

Ms. Caya juggles so many different responsibilities, such as following up with patients who left the program, coordinating and facilitating family meetings and acting as the liaison between the Department of Defense and Audie L. Murphy VAMC. But the one part that was most remarkable was how she approaches all of these tasks with an unflinching level of enthusiasm. She always goes above-and-beyond in all that she does.” – Kimberly C. Ford, L.M.S.W.-Clinical Polytrauma Social Work Supervisor, Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital

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Stephanie Chin-Le, L.C.S.W., Polytrauma Case Manager, Polytrauma Network Site, VA Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, California

“Stephanie Chin-Le is an enormous asset to the team. She gives top quality service to the veterans and their families. She has demonstrated her leadership, such as working to develop programs for veterans returning to school. She is always available and helpful to staff, patients, families and volunteers.” – *Dr. Molly Timmerman, Staff Physician, Polytrauma Network Site, Regional Amputee Center, and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, VA Palo Alto Health Care System*

Robin Dahmen, M.S.N., C.C.M., Warrior Recovery Center, Evans Army Community Hospital, Fort Carson, Colorado

“Ms. Robin Dahmen has been instrumental in the development our multidisciplinary intensive outpatient program for service members with TBI. The Integrated Rehabilitation Outpatient Course (iROC) is a six-week program that includes cognitive retraining, physical activity, sleep education and behavior health services. Ms. Dahmen provided the logistical design and worked with providers to identify patients suited to benefit from iROC. Our full sessions and waiting list for future sessions are due to Ms. Dahmen’s ability to connect with patients, accurately assess their willingness to participate in a group, and her ability to communicate well with each service member’s command to allow them to attend the 18-hour/ week program. She implemented use of the Goal Attainment Scaling and other outcome measures to demonstrate patient-centered improvement from the program. Her effort on this novel program also directly supports future success of our Intrepid Spirit.” – *USPHS Cmdr. Alicia Souvignier, Officer-in-Charge, Warrior Recovery Center Rehabilitation Services, Evans Army Community Hospital*



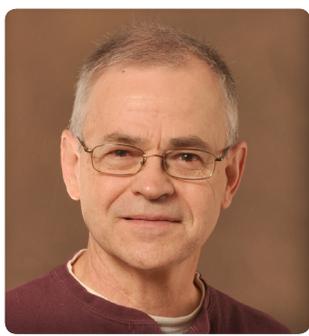
Lisa Dandurand, L.C.S.W., Care Management Coordinator, Warrior Recovery Center, Deployment and Behavioral Health, Camp Pendleton, California

“Lisa Dandurand joined Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) in 2009 as the Regional Care Coordinator (now Recovery Support Specialist) at the Naval Medical Center San Diego covering Southern California, Arizona and Nevada. During her tenure as a RSS, Lisa was a major asset to our program. She hit the ground running; had a can-do attitude and was unflappable. There was absolutely no challenge that was too big for her to handle. Lisa transitioned to another part of DVBIC at Camp Pendleton in 2014, and although she will be missed, we are happy

that she is very nearby, continuing her work with wounded warriors.” – *Lori Dickerson-Odoms, Program Analyst, DVBIC, Silver Spring, Maryland*

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David Richards, Psy.D., L.S.W., Polytrauma/TBI Coordinator, Coatesville VA Medical Center, Coatesville, Pennsylvania

“Dr. David Richards is the backbone of our Polytrauma/TBI clinic team. He manages the referral process, meets with each veteran prior to clinic visits, participates in the team meeting and conducts ongoing follow-ups to ensure veterans are getting the recommended treatment. Dr. Richards completes the care plans, provides them to the veterans and any inpatient care team involved and also tracks the follow-up. He is truly dedicated to providing the veterans with the best service possible. We as a team are very fortunate to have him, as is this facility and our veterans.” – *Dr. Pushpa Thakkar, Staff Psychiatrist and Cheryl Laurento, Coatesville VA Medical Center*

Elizabeth Ruiz, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., Polytrauma/TBI Social Work Case Manager, Post-Deployment Rehabilitation & Evaluation Program (PREP), James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital, Tampa, Florida

“Ms. Ruiz is a key member of PREP, a unique inpatient program created to care for service members/veterans with mild TBI and PTSD that accepts referrals from across the country. Elizabeth goes above and beyond. She is an advocate and transition point of contact for the program, facilitating proper evaluations and treatment and is the primary coordinator in setting up and transitioning service members/veterans back to their communities. She ensures clear and thorough communication of recommended expectations, outcomes and plans of care between providers, patients and families. This is especially difficult with patients from rural settings with limited resources. This is the area where Elizabeth truly shines. She tirelessly taps into any and all resources at her disposal to ensure that both active-duty service members and veterans get the best care possible. She works to educate VA and DoD case managers in the areas of TBI/PTSD and to improve communication between programs and systems of care. She was instrumental in the PREP program’s recent initial accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Elizabeth is a true patient advocate. In addition, Elizabeth has played an integral role in program development. She has created marketing materials, arranged lectures to promote the PREP program, been integral to examining program outcomes and using this information to demonstrate to the community the benefit of our treatment program. PREP consistently demonstrates positive outcomes in symptom reduction, including TBI, PTSD and pain issues. Without her valuable and dedicated input, creative ideas, encouragement and overall support, demonstrating these positive outcomes would not be possible. Elizabeth's enthusiasm, support, understanding and encouragement to each of our patients are demonstrated by some of the highest outcomes ratings on our team by the veterans and service members we serve.” – *Dr. Bryan Merritt, Medical Director, PREP; Dr. Tracy Kretzmer, Neuropsychologist, PREP; and Sebrina Posey, Social Work Section Chief; James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital*



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Marie L. Sullivan, M.S.W., *Coordinator, Polytrauma/TBI Support Clinic Team, Providence VA Medical Center (PVAMC), Providence, Rhode Island*

“Since joining our Polytrauma/TBI Team in 2009, Ms. Sullivan has optimized service delivery. She routinely goes “above and beyond” for our patients. She has arranged for special air transportation for a veteran with severe physical and brain injury; helps veterans obtain service dogs; and makes on-site visits to a community-based residential TBI program to coordinate care. Ms. Sullivan routinely coordinates with other VA sites and non-VA providers for patients to be seen by specialties not available at PVAMC. She has shares our best practices with Polytrauma/TBI coordinators at other facilities in VISN 1. Ms. Sullivan is the indispensable

link the keeps our Polytrauma/TBI Team functioning optimally.” – *Dr. Stephen Mernof, Chief, Neurology Section, Providence VA Medical Center*

Harold Thibodeaux, R.N. C.C.M., *TBI Recovery Support Specialist, San Antonio Military Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas*

“Harold Thibodeaux joined Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) in 2008 and covers the state of Texas. He has demonstrated a deep commitment to the DVBIC mission, and is passionate champion for improving the lives of service members, veterans, and families affected by TBI. He is always willing to go that extra mile to ensure that his clients have the full range of resources to support their recovery. Harold has been recognized by the state of Texas for his work with military and veterans with TBI as Co-Chair of the Military and Veterans Committee for the State of Texas.”

– *Lori Dickerson-Odoms, Program Analyst, DVBIC, Silver Spring, Maryland*



Candy Dunavan, R.N., C.C.M., C.B.I.S., *Admissions Clinical Case Manager, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia (recognized for the second time)*

“Candy Dunavan has actively secured admissions here for several patients from different states, which afforded them care that they may not have received otherwise. She is extremely knowledgeable about TBI and has established a very strong rapport with the treatment teams located throughout the Richmond VA facility. She is a strong advocate for service members and a great asset to the VA system. We are truly blessed to have her on our team.” – *Teresa Wootson, RN Case Manager, Thomas Koritz Clinic, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina*



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Jessica Hollie, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W., Inpatient Polytrauma Social Work Case Manager, Minneapolis VA Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

“Ms. Jessica Hollie excels in locating hard-to-find services and resources for wounded warriors with TBI. She has placed patients in specialty brain injury programs across the nation and has coordinated discharges to home for patients who require total care. Her intensive work with patients and families prepares them for the next level of care. She communicates effectively across systems to ensure optimal continuity of care. Her knowledge of the Polytrauma System of Care makes her an invaluable

resource to coworkers and patients alike. She goes above and beyond to identify financial resources and provide emotional support to wounded warriors and their families who are coping with the devastating losses following severe TBI. Her ability to collaborate with patients, their families, the interdisciplinary rehab team, and VA/military case managers is exceptional.” – April Cerqua, Senior Social Worker, Minneapolis VA Medical Center

Eva Shinka, L.C.S.W.-C., TBI Social Work Case Manager, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), Bethesda, Maryland

“During the 18 months since she joined the DVBIC team, Eva Shinka has consistently demonstrated her willingness to go above and beyond what is normally asked of a provider to support not only her patients, but her coworkers as well. She also takes the initiative to expand TBI awareness and education within the TBI service and to other areas of the hospital. Eva is model of professionalism and caring, not only with respect to patient services, but also

how she interacts with her coworkers. She always greets everyone with a smile and a hello, and she goes out of her way to include others in her ideas and plans for the clinic. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of her devotion to her patients and her job is her unwavering commitment to do the small things well. She has personally escorted patients to their next destination if they are unsure where to go, regardless of whether they are her patients. The motto at Walter Reed is “What We Do Matters,” but Eva consistently takes it one step further in that what we do matters, even if no one sees you do it. She executes her job responsibilities flawlessly, and does so without being asked and without looking for gratitude when she does it. Her dedication, humility, and genuine spirit of giving serve as an example to her coworkers and staff in other departments.” – Kristine Dell, TBI Psychometrist and Heather Kopf, Regional Education Coordinator, WRNMMC



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Mary Ann Delrie, Nurse Case Manager/Program Manager, Fort Polk TBI Clinic, Louisiana

“Ms. Mary Ann Delrie oversees the care of TBI patients from referral to successful completion, arranging resources for individual soldiers based on their individual needs. She goes above and beyond expectations by independently reassessing and improving case management for her patients and the TBI clinic as a whole. She liaisons with other providers frequently, manages taskers and reports for the TBI clinic, facilitates the weekly staff meeting and is adept at securing hard-to-find services for our small TBI clinic here at Fort Polk. Ms. Delrie is kind, competent, and is a preferred provider in the care of our wounded soldiers.” – *Dr. Daniel Lee, Staff Psychiatrist, Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital, Fort Polk*



Anne M. Winters, M.S.W., LCSW-C, TBI Case Manager, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), Bethesda, Maryland (recognized for the second time)

“Ms. Anne Winters is responsible for conducting comprehensive bio-psychosocial evaluations, analyzing medical data, developing medical treatment plans, providing consultations and education for patients and their families, supervisors, medical personnel and commanding officers. She always works with the highest level of integrity and professional ethics and within the framework of the TBI Clinical Practice Guidelines set by the Departments of Defense and the Veterans Administration. Ms. Winters enthusiastically looks forward to new TBI research, methods, approaches and procedures to meet the changing program requirements and treatments for TBI patients. She is a valued teammate at DVBIC and the WRNMMC TBI Clinic.” – *Teresa Burke, Recovery Support Specialist, Intrepid Spirit One, Fort Belvoir, Virginia*

Pat Scott, R.N., TBI Case Manager, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Landstuhl, Germany

“Pat Scott is known for her continued, kind, compassionate and dedicated service to our service members. She quietly and effectively supports her patients to achieve such positive medical and rehabilitative goals. While her demeanor is so unassuming, her attention to care is so very dedicated. Ms. Scott’s humble nature would never seek to bring attention to her numerous accomplishments and care. She is one of our unsung heroes who has such a gentle heart and has accomplished such outstanding care for our service members. She goes above and beyond to assist our nation’s wounded warriors with TBI.” – *Dr. Kendra Jorgensen-Wagers, Outpatient Behavioral Health Clinician and M.J. Hoban, FNP, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center*



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Teresa Wootson, M.S.N., B.S.N., RN Case Manager, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina (recognized for the second time)

“Mrs. Teresa Wootson has made hope as her mission. With this in mind, Mrs. Wootson overcame several hurdles with one case in particular. An active duty service member was severely injured in an accident. Initially, the patient was recovering at a nearby hospital but placement at a polytrauma center was essential for this patient to continue his recovery. Mrs. Wootson worked aggressively on this case to ensure the patient was transferred. The patient is currently in rehabilitation and continues to make improvements. Mrs. Wootson dedicated her time and efforts to ensure this

wounded warrior received the best possible care. Although Mrs. Wootson never met this patient, she was instrumental in his care and recovery.” – *Air Force Capt. Judd Hailey, Healthcare Integrator, Seymour Johnson AFB*



Kathleen Yount, R.N., B.S., M.A., Wounded Warrior/Active Duty Case Manager, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

“Kathleen Yount has been at the forefront in caring for our wounded Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines with TBI and associated combat injuries. Since the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) opened in 2010, she has facilitated and coordinated successful treatment completion for over a dozen TBI candidates. In 2012, she collaborated with newly arrived neurologist to identify and include physical/speech therapy, chiropractic, and acupuncture into a newly formed TBI multidisciplinary team. Today, Eglin's military treatment facility TBI Care Team meets

monthly to case manage over 50 active TBI cases, ensuring individualized treatment regimens are administered quickly. Ms. Yount established in-processing screening procedures with disease management to identify incoming service members for potential need for TBI services. Kathy's demonstrated excellence and commitment to our nation's wounded warriors has resulted in the advanced treatment, expansion of services, and comprehensive care for our military heroes.” – *Michael Mack, Recovery Care Coordinator, Eglin and Tyndall AFB*

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Patricia Jackson, M.S., R.N., C.R.R.N., Polytrauma Nurse Coordinator, Lexington VA Medical Center, Lexington, Kentucky

“Patty has served as case manager in the Polytrauma Program since its beginning in 2006. Her credential as a Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse (CRRN) has been evident in the development of this program both locally at the VA but also in the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 09 region of Kentucky and Tennessee. Her rehabilitation expertise has been apparent in the case management role and the interdisciplinary team development, and is evident by positive comments received from veterans who access her services. She is instrumental in providing direction to the

veteran regarding applying for all related disability and vocational options and providing education to the veteran and family regarding all aspects of care. Additionally, Ms. Jackson serves as the VISN 09 Regional Polytrauma Coordinator. She coordinates the region's case manager group efforts, including education regarding new processes, and serves as resource person for unique challenging cases from rehabilitation nursing and case management perspectives.” – *Brenda French, Polytrauma Staff Educator, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia*

Sharon McKinney, R.N., B.S.N., M.H.A., C.W.O.C.N. TBI/Polytrauma Coordinator, Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

“Mrs. Sharon McKinney has tremendously improved our hospital TBI case management program and significantly increased the number of consults by 67 percent by providing education (new employee education, inpatient TBI group, refresher programs for current staff and providers, and coordination of two mini-summits on TBI education with multidisciplinary TBI team members). Mrs. McKinney and our TBI team service veterans in remote areas of the rural deep South. Mrs. McKinney always goes above and beyond her duties, she is exceptionally well liked by all staff and patients, and our TBI program is thriving thanks to her excellent work.” – *Dr. Mia A. Bergman, Staff Psychologist, Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center*



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Katryna Deary, R.N., M.S.N., C.C.M., Non-clinical Nurse Case Manager, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Care Coalition, MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida

“Retired Army Lt. Col. Katryna Deary has gone well above and beyond the standard in seeking and solidifying special services for both active and veteran wounded, ill and injured (WII) service members across all four services. She established a partnership with Carrick Brain Center, ensuring lodging, transportation and treatment costs were covered for approximately 30 veterans. She also created a partnership with the Tampa VA Post-deployment Rehabilitation and Evaluation Program (PREP), resulting in over 100 active and veteran referrals for TBI and comorbid conditions. Lt. Col. Deary also laid the groundwork for an organizational partnership with Wake Forest School of Medicine for TBI/PTSD treatment. Lt. Col. Deary continues to work these and research other innovative TBI treatment modalities across the United States to provide the best services to USSOCOM WII personnel, past and present.” – Army Sgt. Maj. H. Kelly Ammerman, Senior Enlisted Advisor, USSOCOM Care Coalition

Kathy Douglas, L.C.S.W., C.-A.S.W.C.M. Clinical Social Worker/Case Manager, Naval Branch Health Clinic Groton, Groton, Connecticut

“Ms. Douglas is an invaluable resource to the patients and providers of the TBI Clinic. During the case management brief she conducts with each monthly treatment cohort, Ms. Douglas provides information and enrollment materials for Navy Safe Harbor, Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, and the DVBIC Recovery Support Program. She has gone above and beyond by assisting service members with PTSD in obtaining therapy dogs from the group Puppies Behind Bars. She has also assisted patients with significant psychological health issues living in remote locations obtain specialized therapies for treatment of their symptoms.” – USPHS Lt. Cmdr. Michael Kluk, Program Manager, TBI Clinic, Naval Branch Health Clinic Groton



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Rosalind Runnels, M.S.W., A.C.S.W., TBI/Polytrauma Social Work Case Manager, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Los Angeles, California

“Rosalind Runnels is always kind, thoughtful, gracious and efficient. She is a team player. She shares resources, helps to coordinate care and makes our work place more pleasant and effective. We cannot handpick our coworkers. I feel blessed to have Rosalind Runnels on my team. I know when I refer a veteran to her there will be follow-up and careful attention. Rosalind Runnels serves our veterans well. She supports her coworkers, so together we can provide a high quality of care and respect to our veterans.” – *Cindy McQuade, OEF/OIF/OND Care Manager, Post Deployment*

Clinic-Veterans Transition Center, West Los Angeles Veterans Health Care System

Georgia Garrison, R.N., Clinical Nurse Case Manager, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina

“Georgia Garrison works tirelessly with each one of her patients. She works to ensure the patient’s appointments are secured and that the patient is knowledgeable about why certain appointments are made. She has found creative ways to help the patient maintain some level of independence. She establishes rapport with the patient and willingly helps in any way possible. I’m proud to work with Georgia. She is a great asset to our military treatment facility and to our service members.” – *Teresa Wootson, RN Case Manager, Thomas Koritz Clinic, Seymour Johnson AFB*

