

Military TBI Case Management Quarterly Newsletter

TBI Case Management Community of Interest

DVBIC Honors TBI Case Managers



The Case Management Society of America defines case management as:

“A collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual’s and family’s comprehensive health needs through communication and available resources to promote quality, cost-effective outcomes.”

However, it is the philosophy and art behind case management that are truly impressive, and it is an under-recognized service utilized by our service members and veterans who have sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI). TBI has a global impact on patients and families. It is never planned, which makes the recovery even more complex, not only for the patients, but their families as well.

Case managers connect our service members and veterans with services to ensure successful recovery from the initial injury throughout the rehabilitation process. Additionally, the network of TBI case managers supports families during their loved ones’ recovery to ensure successful transition for the entire family. That task can be overwhelming; yet dedicated TBI case managers coordinate services and support injured service members and their families every day across the globe.

At the micro level, the intangible connection and anecdotes of success highlight the niche of case managers. At the macro level, the Defense Veterans Brain Injury Center has the honor of recognizing exemplary TBI case managers nominated by their peers for excellence in case management.

The nominations speak for themselves. Thank you for your service and dedication to our service members and veterans.

Katharine Stout, P.T., D.P.T., N.C.S., M.B.A.
Director of Clinical Affairs
Defense Veterans Brain Injury Center

About the 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 (DCoE). It is intended for case managers and other providers who support warriors with TBI and their families. The newsletter is a forum to share best practices, ideas 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.

If you need TBI resource assistance or transition support for your patients, contact the [DVBIC TBI Recovery Support Program](#). You can also request an onsite or video teleconferencing presentation about the program.



The ICE questionnaire allows you to tell us more about your awareness and satisfaction with the newsletter. Thank you for your participation.



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This newsletter is a special edition that highlights exemplary TBI case managers from across the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs. The call for nominations was issued in the fall 2015 issue of the newsletter. Colleagues who nominated TBI case managers and care coordinators have provided the descriptions below and reflect the variety and exceptional level of services offered. Recognition is based on their innovative practices and high performance that contribute to the advancement of case management processes supporting wounded warriors with TBI and their families.



Donna Stewart, Catherine Morgan, Etta Dalton, Jennifer Welch

375th Medical Group Recovery Care Team: Donna Stewart, R.N., B.S.N., Case Manager; Catherine Morgan, R.N., B.S.N., Case Manager; Etta Dalton, R.N., Case Manager; Jennifer Welch, B.A., Recovery Care Coordinator; 375th Medical Group, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois

“The Recovery Care Team (RCT) at Scott AFB provides support through the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program. The case managers and recovery care coordinator work in concert to coordinate medical support for service members in OCONUS and CONUS locations. This team approach alleviates the wounded warriors and families of undue stress and uncertainty and ensures all patients receive the best care. They have gone above and beyond by coordinating interstate physical, speech, and cognitive therapies. They provided home visits, obtained service dogs, and Polytrauma/TBI care for our proud veterans. Their focus is to rehabilitate all service members to their full potential. Through their constant outreach and endurance, several wounded warriors have returned to active duty and completed their Bachelor’s degrees. One service member was able to present at the 2015 Airlift/Tanker Convention. The RCT team is instrumental in educating the base community, supervisors and commanding officers on resources available for the wounded warriors and veterans. The RCT continually strives to create a program for all patients and family members to receive top-notch coordinated care. We are grateful for our team.” – Air Force Lt. Col. Leontyne Fields, Health Care Integrator, 375th Medical Group, Scott AFB, Illinois

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Sarah McNary, R.N., M.S.N., United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Care Coalition, TBI Nurse Case Manager, TBI Clinic, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC), Landstuhl, Germany

“Ms. Sarah McNary has provided outstanding and extraordinary care as a TBI nurse case manager. She was instrumental in identifying a specific cohort population (Special Operations Forces) that was a high-incidence, high-recurrent TBI population with high resistance to receiving treatment. Through her personal passion and fortitude to bring this population into TBI care and rehabilitation, she has made incredible gains in this endeavor. Her individual actions have resulted in education of command-level members of the importance of TBI evaluations and treatment. Her actions have also resulted in training of SOF medics and medical support personnel of the importance of the rest period after acute concussions, and recognition of the

consequences and injuries seen with repetitive concussive events. She made significant inroads into this close-knit community in demonstrating that early evaluation and treatment increases their performance and recovery and is not merely an avenue of limiting their activities and duties. She has continued to track the care of these patients and provided outstanding service to her patients. She has received numerous accolades and positive patient comments throughout SOCOM and RCHE (Regional Health Command Europe) services.” – *Dr. Juan Rivera, TBI Clinic Chief, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center*

“Sarah McNary has been a vital asset to the USSOCOM Care Coalition. This past year, she managed over 175 TBI cases. During this time, she identified treatment deficiencies amongst Special Operations Forces (SOF) assets in Europe. Realizing this gap in medical care, Ms. McNary coordinated and scheduled over 2,000 appointments, greatly optimizing the available assets at LRMC. Ms. McNary identified and resolved these issues and additionally spearheaded a SOF-specific, multi-disciplinary fortitude model of care, designed to increase access to care while maintaining provider continuity and communication. Ms. McNary’s TBI documentation screening process incorporates concussive and sub-concussive events associated with high-risk, combat-simulated, specialty schools and training within SOF. Ms. McNary also facilitated the non-profit funding and furnishing of two patient apartments, greatly reducing unit cost.” – *Army SGM H.K. Ammerman, USSOCOM Care Coalition SEA (Senior Enlisted Advisor)*

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Jill Thurman, L.C.S.W., TBI Case Manager, VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System, Leeds, Massachusetts

“It has been a great pleasure and learning experience to work on the same team with Jill Thurman, the TBI Coordinator. When I first arrived at Leeds in 2009 assigned as a social work case manager for the Transition & Care Management (formerly OEF/OIF) Program, my team leader requested that I attend Ms. Thurman's interdisciplinary Friday meetings along with the neuropsychologist, physiatrist and other applicable therapies (physical, occupational, speech and other specialists). Ms. Thurman had the necessary leadership to bring this technical medical team together to work one TBI case at a time. When further technical medical assistance was required, Ms. Thurman would connect with another VA, military medical facility or civilian medical facility. Ms. Thurman also supervised M.S.W. interns, mentoring them on managing TBI cases. I have processed hundreds of TBI screens for returning OEF/OIF/OND veterans and I have never heard anything but praise about their experience working with her. She seeks out medical information necessary for treatment of these positive TBI veterans and consults with other experts when necessary to get the veterans proper medical care. In her years as the TBI coordinator, Ms. Thurman has brought great credit upon herself, VA Central Western Massachusetts, VISN 1 and the Department of Veterans Affairs.” – *Chester Papineau, Social Work Case Manager, Transition & Care Management Program, and Dr. Ahmad Karagah, Chief, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System, Leeds, Massachusetts*



Marcus Adolphus, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W., Social Work Case Manager, Transition & Care Management, Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

“We are nominating Marcus Adolphus to be recognized for his work with the traumatic brain injury community. He carries a caseload of 120 veterans, of which 30 percent have a TBI diagnosis. One of his cases, a severely injured amputee veteran with TBI, and multiple serious medical issues, has lived back and forth between the United States and a U.S. territory, where the medical services are not available to meet his needs. This complex case has required much time and expert skills at communication and coordination, as the veteran is receiving treatment between four medical facilities, multiple community agencies and between the United States mainland and a territory. Marcus has been the driving force and the glue holding together the treatment team. In addition, Marcus is a social work field instructor and co-chairs a successful social work customer service committee. He actively covers for coworkers and serves as acting program manager.” – *Elsie Moore, Program Manager, Transition & Care Management, Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center, Washington, D.C.; Jean Langbein, Clinical Outcomes Coordinator, Office of Outcomes and Assessment, Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, Silver Spring, Maryland*

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Heather E. Berard, M.S.W., C.S.W.-P.I.P., Caregiver Support Coordinator, Polytrauma Social Work Case Manager, Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

“Heather Berard is an extremely enterprising TBI and polytrauma social work case manager. She is often faced with challenges that transcend the initial injuries sustained by the patients due to the continuing needs accompanying the comprehensive management of their injuries. Heather’s accomplishments and dedication are a testimony to her personal character and commitment. Over the past three years, Heather has been assisting an Army Reservist who has not fully transitioned to veteran status; he is highly decorated and represents one of the greatest challenges for case management – securing optimal care during the transition period. Heather has remained patient-focused throughout this journey. Through her relentless efforts she developed an innovative opportunity to receive care at a Department of Defense military treatment facility with the utilization of a sharing agreement with her VA Medical Center and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Her continued professional oversight of this case has ensured that one of our honored heroes is receiving the optimal medical care through the collaboration of the VA and the DoD.” – *Candy Dunavan, Admissions Clinical Case Manager, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia*



Francis (Fran) Haggerty, L.C.S.W., M.B.A., Polytrauma/TBI/SCI Coordinator, Wilmington VA Medical Center, Wilmington, Delaware

“As a TBI case manager, one might compare oneself to a salmon swimming up a very rocky stream, often relying on pure instinct to achieve the desired outcome. Over the course of the past year, I have shared in the journey with one of the most honorable and dedicated case managers I know, as he painstakingly supports care for his patients. There are numerous programs available to veterans who have sustained a TBI, but the overused saying “one size fits all” does not apply, because each case is unique. At the end of the day, a case manager may feel overwhelmed and frustrated because a patient was declined and the treatment options have dwindled. Imagine being a retired veteran, who proudly served your country and after you retired, a motorcycle accident robbed you of the future you had planned to live. Imagine the family who is shattered and the financial hardship that follows such a tragedy. Now, imagine having a champion like Fran Haggerty

who envisioned the possibilities and reached out to stakeholders until his patient was admitted to the optimal program that opened up new doors of recovery for both the patient and the family. The essence of the commitment and devotion Fran brings both to the VA and to his patients is captured at the end of the day when he triumphs after successfully attaining care for his patients following immeasurable perseverance. Lastly, imagine the outcome – the restoration of Hope.” – *Candy Dunavan, Admissions Clinical Case Manager, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia*

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Transition & Care Management Team: Susan Watkins, M.S.W., C.S.W., L.C.S.W., Program Manager; Mike Marhelko, R.N., B.S.N., M.H.A., C.C.M., Nurse Case Manager; Veronica Oliver, M.S.N., R.N., C.C.M., Nurse Case Manager; Colette Wallace, B.S.N, R.N., C.C.M., Nurse Case Manager; Lisa Depeal, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.-C.P., Social Work Case Manager; Jeanette Stevenson, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., A.C.S.W., C.S.W.-H.C., C.A.S.W.-C.M, Social Work Case Manager; Marlee Welsh, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., Social Work Case Manager; Michael Redic, Transition Patient Advocate; Sonya Isler, R.N., M.S.N., M.B.A., H.C.M., Clinic Registered Nurse; Yolanda Kirby, Program Support Assistant; Durham VA Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina

“The Transition & Care Management (TCM) team at the Durham VA Medical Center exemplifies the finest clinical care available today to America’s returning warriors. This team began in late 2005 with a vision for collaborative interdisciplinary care built around the veteran and family members. In the 10 years since, the Durham TCM team’s excellence in caring for severely ill and injured service members has been recognized by local media, a national VA award, and, most importantly, our veteran patients. Since 2005, the average number of clinical visits per veteran per year has grown from around two to over 17, a statistic that clearly shows our ‘customers’ returning for additional VA clinical care. During 2015, the team brought together 200 attendees from the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, state government, and numerous private and public colleges to discuss how best to improve higher education for veterans. Also in 2015, the team produced another successful outreach event at the North Carolina State Fair, following up the 2014 event in which the state National Guard commanding general asked our team to join the Guard’s fair booth. The TCM team plays a vital role in coordinating care, fostering the interdisciplinary relationships among the 12 disciplines regularly at our TBI/Polytrauma case conferences, and ensuring new veterans are promptly identified and brought into VA care.” – *Dr. Bruce Capehart, Medical Director, TCM Team, Durham VA Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina*

Colette Wallace, B.S.N., R.N., B.C., C.C.M., Nurse Case Manager/TBI Care Consultant, Transition & Care Management Team, Durham VA Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina

“Ms. Wallace is a Transition & Care Management case manager as well as the coordinator and triage clinician for the Assisted Living for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (AL-TBI) Pilot Program. The AL-TBI Pilot Program provides assisted living services to eligible veterans with TBI to enhance their rehabilitation, quality of life, and community integration. Ms. Wallace provides supervision of eight to 10 veterans with moderate to severe brain injuries. She monitors care plans, intensity level, documentation and reporting compliance. Veterans at the Durham VA Medical Center are evaluated for TBI in a two-step process: 1st level (initial) evaluation and 2nd level comprehensive exam. In the past six months, there have been appropriately 182 veterans consulted for a 2nd level exam. Ms. Wallace volunteered to review the 2nd level TBI evaluation process. Her review of these consults has resulted in eliminating duplication of those comprehensive evaluations as well as reducing the number of veterans awaiting for evaluation from 42 to 34 days.” – *Susan Watkins, Program Manager, and Veronica Oliver, Nurse Case Manager, Transition & Care Management Team, Durham VA Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina*



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Martha (Marti) Goldberg, R.N., Nurse Case Manager, TBI Clinic, 673rd Medical Group, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

“Marti has been affectionately nicknamed by a patient the “bulldog” of TBI because of her advocacy on behalf of patient needs/rights. On numerous occasions, she has helped patients through the Medical Evaluation Board process, one of which recently took over two years to complete. Marti spearheads the restorative yoga class that we offer weekly to both TBI and Intensive Outpatient Program patients. Marti often accompanies patients to specific appointments, visits them in the hospital when they have procedures within the facility, and even has assisted in motivating and assisting patients in submitting, and later receiving, their Purple Hearts. Lastly, Marti is our link between the Army and Air Force mental health facilities. She ensures our high-risk Army patients are engaging in mental health care by voluntarily attending meetings to ensure comprehensive care is taking place. She meets all the nominating criteria for excellence in TBI case management.” – *Air Force Maj. Joel Cartier, Biomedical Science Corps, TBI Clinic Director/Mental Health Provider, 673rd Medical Operations Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska*



Sheree Gordon, R.N., B.S.N., C.C.M., Nurse Case Manager, Polytrauma Program, Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

“We are nominating Sheree Gordon to be recognized for her work with the traumatic brain injury community. Sheree demonstrates extraordinary commitment to the Polytrauma Network Site program. She manages a caseload of 90+ veterans and works diligently with other agencies and teams to provide seamless care. Sheree has been involved on multiple national workgroups for case management processes and has presented in various forums. She is perceived as a subject matter expert to others within the D.C. VA Medical Center network and in the field. Sheree has been instrumental in the development of case management services for the TBI population. She and an interdisciplinary team won an award for their design of a health care structure that assigns one case manager to each OEF/OIF veteran, now considered a “Best Practice” throughout the Veterans Health Administration.” – *Elsie Moore, Program Manager, Transition & Care Management Program; Dr. Joel Scholten, Associate Chief of Staff for Rehabilitation Services; Heather Malecki, Rehabilitation & Polytrauma Coordinator; Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center, Washington, D.C.*

Management Program; Dr. Joel Scholten, Associate Chief of Staff for Rehabilitation Services; Heather Malecki, Rehabilitation & Polytrauma Coordinator; Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

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Meghan Leach, L.C.S.W., and Laura Riegler, L.C.S.W., Polytrauma Social Work Case Managers, St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, St. Louis, Missouri

"Meghan and Laura recently held the 2nd Annual Polytrauma Retreat, which served 12 local veterans. Over three days, veterans received educational and recreational workshops to promote a healthier and more successful reintegration to the St. Louis community. Laura and Meghan share a passion for working with veterans. They develop and keep good rapport with their veterans, and their veterans trust them. They are creative and come up with inventive ways to reach veterans who may otherwise not be willing to engage in care. Laura and Meghan worked countless hours planning the retreat. They utilized their experience, understanding of evidence-based research and knowledge to craft a program that was personalized for veterans with polytrauma injuries. They collaborated with other disciplines to bring an interdisciplinary approach to the retreat and the veterans were able to connect with other veterans in a supportive environment." – *Kristen Spencer, Social Worker, Community Living Center, St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, St. Louis, Missouri*



Laura Riegler and
Meghan Leach



Capt. Laura Jarrell, R.N., B.S.N., Nurse Case Manager, Army Warrior Transition Brigade – Bethesda, Able Troop Company, Bethesda, Maryland

"Although I never had the chance to meet Capt. Laura Jarrell in person, I was impressed beyond words with her commitment and compassion toward her patients and her ability to provide a calm, professional presence during a very intense and taxing event, as we partnered to ensure that her soldier continued to receive optimal care and was able to progress to the next phase of his recovery journey. As a seasoned nurse, she is able to draw from her experience and knowledge base to assess the needs of her soldier and implement an action plan that is patient-centered yet considerate of the needs of his family without losing sight of the mission at hand. She was able to obtain and collaborate on the orders, signatures and necessary changes in his DEERs enrollment, and coordinate a travel plan that included escorts in another state in order to maintain continuity of care for her soldier. Without her countless hours of dedicated diligence,

her ability to find a doorway of opportunity when all others had been closed, and her ability to take command of the situation, the smooth transition and warm-hand-off between stakeholders would not have been possible. It is hard to imagine the demands of an active duty Army captain, serving as a nurse case manager with a full case load - the ease in which she executes each task is representative of her leadership and commitment to humanity." – *Candy Dunavan, Admissions Clinical Case Manager, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia*

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Emily Manza, L.C.S.W., TBI Case Manager, TBI/NICoE Satellite at Fort Belvoir, Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, Fort Belvoir, Virginia

“Ms. Emily Manza has been a critical member of the team here. As the only case manager for the TBI/NICoE Satellite at Fort Belvoir when she joined us in 2014, she single-handedly developed the case management services for our wounded warriors and their family members. She continues to go above and beyond for her patients while in our clinic and coordinates their care as they transition to the VA system, ensuring the service member gets the best care possible. She has been a key contributor to the success of our program and the successful outcomes for our patients. Her excellent case management skills also translate into better data collection for our research studies. She is one of the top case managers with whom I had the pleasure to collaborate. She truly deserves all the accolades from DVBIC and the

military health system.” – *Dr. Heechin Chae, Director, TBI/NICoE Satellite at Fort Belvoir*

“Emily has supported wounded warriors and their family members during their rehabilitation and recovery, and through their time of discharge from the clinic. Emily presents case information to the other providers in the clinic weekly and facilitates multidisciplinary collaboration to develop care plans. Emily is often called Dr. Chae’s ‘Right-Hand Person.’ She is a major contributor to successful patient outcomes in case managing the care of our wounded warriors who have sustained mild and moderate traumatic brain injuries.” – *Teresa Burke, TBI Recovery Support Specialist, TBI/NICoE Satellite at Fort Belvoir*

“Emily goes above and beyond for her patients. When a provider left the clinic this fall, she ensured the continuity of care for her patients as they transitioned to a new provider, making the change seamless for the patients. With the development of our University Model, she has been a valuable resource for our patients as she coordinates their care to ensure they obtain the services they need while still fulfilling their obligations at work and at home. She has been a key contributor to the success of our program. I consistently hear patients and providers in the clinic praise Ms. Manza for all her hard work, and we are grateful to have her as a member of our team.” – *Kendra Mitchell, Clinic Manager, TBI/NICoE Satellite at Fort Belvoir*

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Jessica Quintanilla, R.N., C.C.M., Nurse Case Manager, Brain Injury Clinic, U.S. Army Health Clinic, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii

Often after a traumatic brain injury, the recovery of an individual is complicated by pre-morbid personality traits that are magnified during the recovery phase. Jessica Quintanilla demonstrated her dynamic ability to assess the needs of her patient and push for more while managing the care for an active duty sailor who had sustained a severe TBI in a motor vehicle accident and was not engaging in the treatment programs she had championed on his behalf. This service member had entered into a substance abuse program in Virginia and then returned to his home port in Hawaii. It was determined he would still benefit from an inpatient rehab program. Ms. Quintanilla was able to coordinate the care with the Palo Alto VA Medical Center where again this patient struggled with a successful outcome. Ms. Quintanilla reached out to a second program at the Richmond VA Medical Center and, due to his inability to engage in previous programs, a recommendation was provided instead to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). Her continued efforts to develop proactive patient-centered relationships with necessary stakeholders were evidenced by coordinating the discussions between the patient's command, providers and the attending physician at WRNMMC. She coordinated the transportation plans to WRNMMC and continued to advocate for him. After his treatment at WRNMMC, she coordinated the next phase of his recovery in the Servicemember Transitional Advanced Rehabilitation Program (STAR) program at the Richmond VAMC. Through her ethical precepts of beneficence, autonomy, justice and fidelity, she has emulated both her core values and dedication to her patient population." – *Candy Dunavan, Admissions Clinical Case Manager, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia*



Aviance Betts, B.S.N, M.H.A., R.N., R.N. Case Manager, TBI Clinic, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Landstuhl, Germany

"Ms. Betts has performed extraordinarily well as a TBI nurse case manager at the TBI clinic in Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC). She has always demonstrated care, compassion, and desire to increase patient quality of life and access to medical care. She has been instrumental in increasing patient awareness and access to the TBI clinic at LRMC. She has participated in multi-disciplinary meetings with behavioral health, TBI, primary care, and outlying military healthcare clinics. She has implemented a TBI screening and intake process for the clinic that not only improved access to care but streamlined the process for patients to receive evaluations and true multi-disciplinary care in an efficient and meaningful way. She has demonstrated willingness to go above and beyond typical nurse case manager duties and has assisted with international and NATO alliance members' care for TBI services. She most certainly should be recognized as one of our most outstanding TBI Clinic nurse case managers." – *Dr. Juan Rivera, TBI Clinic Chief, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Landstuhl, Germany*

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Candy Dunavan, R.N., C.C.M., C.R.R.N., C.B.I.S., Admissions Clinical Case Manager (recognized for the third time), and Carolyn Donahue, B.S.W., R.N., C.B.I.S., TBI Recovery Support Specialist, (recognized for the second time), Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia

“Candy Dunavan and Carolyn Donahue have worked as a team here to ensure that our service members and veterans gain access to appropriate care for their injuries and have served as outstanding advocates and educators for patients and family members. They both have helped to energize and support the organization of our VA/DoD Collaborative Care Coordination Symposium held here this past June to facilitate communication between case managers from the DoD and the VA along with representatives from Tricare. The symposium was an unqualified success in achieving this goal.

Carolyn, along with our TBI regional education coordinator, Randal Gross, have been deeply involved in providing a superb educational program about brain injury and its consequences and challenges to our patients and their caregivers at the Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program (PTRP) in the Richmond Polytrauma System of Care. They meet with each of our patients and their family members during the first week of their admission to our program to perform an educational assessment and then follow up to address identified needs. In her role as a recovery support specialist, Carolyn also is involved in facilitating the transition of patients discharged from our program back to their communities.

Candy Dunavan has been a very effective and indefatigable advocate for patients and their caregivers as the admissions coordinator for the PTRP. She is a great communicator and network specialist who has over and over again successfully facilitated the process of getting service members and veterans the services they needed to address their challenges. She has diligently researched available funding resources and specialty veterans care programs, and has studied legislation such as the Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act to the point where she knows how to gain access to the needed resources for the service members and veterans who have been referred to her, whenever access to those resources was deemed possible.”
– Dr. Gary Goldberg, Medical Director, Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center Richmond, Virginia



Candy Dunavan



Carolyn Donahue

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Phyllis D. Ruiz, R.N., M.S.N., C.P.N.P., M.P.H., DVA/DoD MOA Nurse Consultant, The Defense Health Agency–Great Lakes (formerly known as the Military Medical Support Office), Great Lakes, Illinois

“A key responsibility for a case manager is to identify options and services to meet the patient’s health needs. I want to share the remarkable example of someone on the other side of the phone who understands the issues and goes the extra mile for case managers and their patients – Phyllis Ruiz, based at the The Defense Health Agency–Great Lakes (formerly known as the Military Medical Support Office). Phyllis draws upon her lifetime of experience to assist in the medical case management of patients and has provided both education and guidance to several VA case managers supporting TBI patients with complex neurological treatment and rehabilitation needs. For example, she was instrumental in securing authorization for an active duty service member to be admitted to a neuro-recovery facility under contract with the VA Assisted Living for Veterans

with Traumatic Brain Injury (AL-TBI) Program. She has provided the guidance and oversight to create a comprehensive pathway of care designed to assist case managers on the journey to secure the necessary care. Through countless hours, telephone conferences, email exchanges and innovative approaches, she works to maintain continuity of care for our wounded warriors who have sustained a traumatic brain injury and need the type of care management provided at a neuro-recovery facility. She has opened the door for many service members between active duty and transition to veteran status who deserve continuity of care during this period.” – *Candy Dunavan, Admissions Clinical Case Manager, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia*

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Nicole Woodrow, R.N., C.O.T.A./L., B.S., Clinical Nurse Case Manager, Traumatic Brain Injury Assessment Clinic, Fort Drum, New York (recognized for the second time)

Ms. Woodrow goes above and beyond the typical duties of a nurse case manager. In the absence of the TBI program director, she stepped in and assumed many of the director duties for the past five months, while managing more than 450 active TBI soldiers' cases over the past year. Presently, she alone manages care for over 150 TBI soldiers. She wrote several grant proposals resulting in the acquisition of \$5,000 worth of therapeutic supplies for the TBI occupational therapy program. She has worked with the DVBIC TBI recovery support specialists to provide seamless TBI rehab transitions for at least 20 soldiers leaving active duty service and



returning to local civilian and VA community settings. She created a database to capture quality of life outcomes that show improvement: 27 percent improvement in sleep quality, 47 percent improvement in headaches, 80 percent improvement in anger management, 67 percent improvement in memory, 60 percent improvement in concentration, and 47 percent improvement in somatic symptoms. Ms. Woodrow is the epitome of a compassionate, action-oriented thinker and planner who makes our TBI clinic so revered by soldiers, their families and the Fort Drum Army community.” – Lt. Col. Kate Van Arman, Medical Director, Traumatic Brain Injury Assessment Clinic, Fort Drum, New York

“Ms. Woodrow was the driving force behind developing a formal referral process between Fort Drum and the DVBIC TBI Recovery Support Program. By working with the TBI recovery support specialist to develop a referral system, Ms. Woodrow provided service members discharging from the TBI clinic with much needed follow-up care which included receiving assistance with transitioning their care to the VA system, claims and benefits assistance, connection to resources on college campuses, and much more. It is very evident that Ms. Woodrow not only cares about the well-being of her patients while they are in her clinic, but also beyond their time at Fort Drum. This is the true sign of a hard-working, compassionate and thorough case manager who deserves to be recognized for the life-changing services she provides.” – Elizabeth Pletcher, DVBIC TBI Recovery Support Specialist, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland