

Patient Education 2.0

Patient Questions for 6.20.2014

- 1. I would like to know what types of therapies are appropriate for me to participate in BEFORE admission (pool, etc.)**
 - a. Therapies are specific to individual veterans and treatments are developed on admission by the interdisciplinary team to maximize therapeutic benefits and fit individual preferences.

- 2. I am unaware of a lot of the resources available at the VA-How do I learn about resources available at the VA so I can properly schedule the activities/therapy I want during my next admission?**
 - a. Many of the services available at the VA that pertain to our SCI patients are listed in the preadmission packet that is sent to you about 1-2 months prior to admission. There are a couple of different handouts in the packet that list the services that are available: Optometry, Dermatology, Podiatry, Fisher House, Hometel (now Defenders Lodge), to name a few. The preadmission packet instructs you to please contact the Admissions Coordinator when you receive this information to notify us if you'd like these services during your upcoming admission. Many of these appointments fill up fast and the earlier you request them to us, the better chance we should have to get you an appointment during your admission.
 - b. There are also activities through Recreation Therapy that are available once you get here but are often planned on shorter-notice, like BBQs and outings. For these, you will likely have to wait until you're here to find out what is planned. Rec therapy also does pool therapy in our new Aquatic Center, but not everyone is medically able to participate (open wounds, etc.). If this is something you are interested in, let the Admissions Coordinator know before your next admission and the team can then determine whether you are a candidate for the activity.
 - c. Remember that most of these requests do require medical necessity approved by your physician to be granted an appointment.

- 3. How do Veterans gain access to financial support for school?**
 - a. If your level of service connected disability >30% you qualify for financial assistance from the VA.
 - b. There is also the GI Bill which offers vocational rehabilitation assistance
 - c. See your PVA representative for assistance

4. If I do not have a service connected disability, how do I get support for continuing education? I want to go back to school for addiction therapy or medical billing and coding but I cannot afford it and I am not service connected.

- a. The state offers vocational rehabilitation counseling and training.
- b. Department of Labor offers aptitude testing and guidance regarding career selection and training. See DOL web-site.
- c. Some state tuition assistance is available for vocational rehabilitation
- d. Contact SW for assistance in identifying and accessing the appropriate resources for your individual situation.
- e. Vocational tools: http://www.doleta.gov/jobseekers/assess_yourself.cfm

5. Where can I get in-home help support services after my injury? And how do I even find out what types of programs are offered?

- a. Home Health Aid – VA
- b. Bowel and Bladder Care – VA
- c. Service Connected – Aid and Attendant Care – VA
- d. SW can assist in identifying and contacting paid caregivers

6. What is section 8?

- a. This is a housing program.
 - i. Voucher – rent assistance
 - ii. Building – designated buildings with rent that cannot exceed 30% of income

7. What is happening with financial assistance with installing ramps, commodes, and other w/c user equipment (DME) inside personal homes? I ended up having to pay out of pocket for home modifications.

- a. This needs to be explored further with OT and SW. Individual contributions need to be investigated on a case by case basis

8. I was told I am eligible for a pension, how long will it take to receive my pension after the paperwork is filed?

- a. Although the VA has implemented a new program to reduce wait times for claims it is still possible to experience waiting times of several months duration. Please contact PVA for individual assistance.

9. Would I be able to get a manual w/c AND a walker to use at my home after I d/c? Even if the MWC is just for temporary use in my house?

- a. If you are unable to walk community distances, then a wheelchair can be ordered. PT can also look at different types of walkers that will allow you to sit and take a rest break
- b. It depends upon individual limitation/need. Please speak with OT to arrange an assessment and evaluation.

10. Can you provide information about different types of wheelchair ramps to access multiple apparatuses and how to get these ramps installed?

- a. There are modular, straight, folding portable and threshold ramps. VA Prosthetics provides aluminum ramps. Work with your OT to arrange for a ramp company to go out to the home and evaluate the need for the ramp. ADA guidelines are 1 foot of ramp for every one inch of rise. If appropriate, the company will order the ramp and install once parts are received.
- b. Aluminum portable ramps can be provided for community access. Please keep in mind that these ramps are large and heavy, 20-40 pounds each section. It can go up 3 steps. An able-bodied person will need to set it up.
- c. For permanent concrete or wood ramps, it will need to be requested through a HISA (Home Improvement Structural Alteration) grant. Please work with your OT and they can submit the request. You need to work within the VA guidelines. Generally, you will not be reimbursed if you go ahead and have work done on your own and pay for it out of pocket. It is important to follow the HISA guidelines!
- d. There are several different models of ramps that can be installed at any location. OT and SW will assist in having a contractor evaluate your building and generate a set of possible options.

11. Can nurses come to patients in the morning (almost when they first get here) and let the patient know which nurse will be taking care of them for that shift and what the agenda for the rest of the day is?

- a. Please work with your nursing team to discuss the situation. Inform your night nurse that you would like to be able to know your schedule so you can plan your day. Schedules can be posted on individual patient's whiteboards.

12. Why did I go numb during my MRI?

- a. This is an issue that needs to be discussed with your provider. The causes of any numbness or discomfort can vary from patient to patient.

13. When are more BBQ's?

- a. BBQ's are scheduled as sponsoring community partners offer to put them on for the unit. Rec Therapy will inform patients as the BBQ's are scheduled. RT is also working on setting up some type of weekly calendar to inform patients of the events and RT groups happening each week. Where do you as patients feel this calendar could be placed where everyone can access it easily and regularly?