



# SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers comprehensive speech-language pathology services to Veterans and Service members with speech, language, swallowing, cognitive-communication, and voice disorders. Communication includes understanding auditory information, verbal expression, reading comprehension, and writing along with non-verbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions, and sign-language.

## Speech Disorder

When a person is unable to produce speech sounds precisely or fluently he or she may have a speech disorder. A speech-language pathologist offers treatment for motor speech disorders and accent modifications.

## Language Disorder

Difficulty understanding the spoken language and verbal expression or aphasia is often due to stroke or traumatic brain injury. Speech-language pathologists provide individual and group treatment for individuals with language disorders.

## Cognitive Disorder

Cognitive problems include difficulty with attention, memory, orientation, and problem-solving. Speech-language pathologists provide strategies to improve ability to function at home, work or school.

## Voice Disorder

Speech-language pathologists provide evaluation and treatment for disorders of voice including pitch, loudness, nasal resonance or voice quality to be consistent with identified gender.

## Swallowing Problems (Dysphagia)

Dysphagia may co-exist with a wide variety of neurological or structural problems and treatment may include modification of food or liquids, positioning while eating, or exercises to improve swallow function.

## MEDICAL CONDITIONS TREATED

- Injury to the brain, head, neck, spinal cord
- Neurological disorders: Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Amyotrophic Lateral (ALS), Huntington's Disease, muscular dystrophy and dementia or Alzheimer's disease
- Oral and laryngeal cancer
- Laryngeal abnormalities: vocal cord paresis or paralysis
- Respiratory compromise including tracheostomy and ventilator dependence

## TREATMENT SETTING

- With 190 VA sites the 450 speech pathologists and 176 graduate trainees provide services in outpatient clinics and inpatient settings including medical centers, community living centers and their home
- Telehealth is also available to provide treatment to VA outpatient clinics or at home.
- A wide range of technology such as computerized speaking devices, cognitive aids, or a voice prosthesis for individuals that are unable to speak or may need compensatory strategies.