POLYTRAUMA AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides world-class medical and rehabilitation services for Veterans and Service members with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). VA’s Polytrauma/TBI System of Care (PSC) is an integrated nationwide network of over 110 facilities across four tiers of care with specialized rehabilitation programs that provide expertise and access to care at the right time and location.

WHAT IS TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)?

TBI may happen from a blow to the head, or an object penetrating the brain. Falls and vehicular accidents are the most common causes of TBI. The person may experience changes in consciousness ranging from being dazed to slipping into a coma. Most brain injuries are categorized as mild or concussion.

TBI SYMPTOMS

Mild TBI may result in headaches, dizziness, and changes in sleep, behavior and cognition. Symptoms resolve within weeks to months in most individuals. In cases of moderate to severe TBI / Polytrauma, symptoms can be life-threatening and result in long-term functional disability.

TBI SCREENING AND EVALUATION

VA screens all post-9/11 deployed Veterans for possible TBI on their initial entry into VA health care. Veterans with positive TBI screens are referred to specialty providers for comprehensive evaluation and to develop a Plan of Care, as necessary.

INTEGRATED CARE

The hallmark of TBI rehabilitation in VA is patient–centered, integrated care. Veterans, their caregivers, and rehabilitation specialist teams develop and implement a treatment plan that addresses the individual needs and goals of the Veteran and focuses on community reintegration. A Case Manager is assigned to every patient receiving rehabilitation care in the PSC. Case Managers coordinate services and resources to optimize rehabilitation outcomes.
VA’s Polytrauma/TBI System of Care Integrated Network

**SPECIALIZED REHABILITATION PROGRAMING**

- **Assistive Technology Labs** serve to maximize the functional independence of Veterans with disabilities through the use of technology;

- **Transitional Rehabilitation Programs** focus on promoting independence and community reintegration after injury;

- **Telehealth Services** maximize access to specialized rehabilitation care;

- **Intensive Evaluation and Treatment Programs** specialize in post-deployment rehabilitation and mental health needs;

- **Emerging Consciousness Programs** serve Veterans who are slow to recover consciousness after severe brain injuries.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- VA Polytrauma/TBI System of Care
- VA/DoD LIMBIC-CENC Research Knowledge Translation Center
- TBI Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center

For more information, visit www.polytrauma.va.gov

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