

## **Your Care Team**

### *Helpful information*

***In this section:***

- ***You: The Patient***
- ***Medical Staff***
- ***Nursing Staff***
- ***Allied Health Professionals***
- ***Support Staff***
- ***Peer Mentors for People with Spinal Cord Injury***
- ***Caregivers***
- ***Advocates***
- ***Others Who Can Support You***

---

*The staff of the rehab unit is unbelievably vital. What they really “rehabilitate” is our hearts and minds. Many thanks to the staff!*

*~ Patient Advisor*

---

*Note: Care team members are listed in alphabetical order within each section.*

### **You: The Patient**

We strongly urge you to:

- Ask questions about your care and treatment.
- Share information about your care concerns, needs, preferences, and treatment.
- Accept responsibility for learning how to meet your health care needs.
- Learn about all of your medicines – what their names are, why you take them, what they do, and what your usual doses are.



*Rehab unit staff are here to help. Be sure to ask any questions that you have.*

- Do as much as you can for yourself and stay as independent as possible.
- Be an active participant in your health care.
- Read the brochure *Information About Your Health Care* to learn about your rights and responsibilities. This brochure also explains advance directives and durable power of attorney. You will find it in your *Discharge Binder*.

## **Medical Staff**

Many people serve special roles as part of your care team:

### **Attending Doctor**

Your attending doctor, also called a *physiatrist*, is a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation. Your attending doctor directs your care and watches over the care plans and training of resident doctors (see “Resident,” below).

### **Medical Student**

A medical student attends medical school. As a part of their medical education, medical students work closely with the residents to learn about caring for patients in the hospital. At times, medical students receive training on the rehab unit.

### **Resident**

A resident is a doctor who has graduated from medical school and is in training in a special medical or surgical area. An R1 (Resident 1), also called an *intern*, is a resident in the 1st year of training. An R2 is in their 2nd year, an R3 is in their 3rd year, and an R4 is in their 4th year.

### **Nursing Staff**

You receive nursing care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Many of your nurses are certified in rehabilitation nursing.

### **8-North Manager**

The 8-North manager oversees all of the nurses on your care team and is the main person responsible for all operations on the rehab unit.

### **Charge Nurse**

The charge nurse creates the daily nursing assignments, may help in your care, and is in charge of keeping the many services within the unit running smoothly.

### **Clinical Nurse Specialist**

A clinical nurse specialist (CNS) is a nurse who has advanced clinical training with a master's degree. A CNS is an expert in a special aspect of nursing, such as pain management or wound care. The CNS consults with other nurses and the doctors.

### **Nurse Practitioner**

A nurse practitioner, also called an *advanced registered nurse practitioner* (ARNP), is a registered nurse with a graduate degree who has received specialized training to diagnose and treat common medical problems. Many ARNPs have advanced clinical care skills in a specialized area.

### **Patient Care Technician**

Patient care technicians (PCTs) care for patients as directed by an RN. They help you with personal care such as bathing, dressing, feeding, and toileting. They also help you with getting out of bed and walking on the unit. A PCT may also be called a *nurse's aide*, *hospital assistant*, or *orderly*.

### **Primary Nurse**

Each patient has a primary nurse who provides bedside care and coordinates all aspects of daily care with other teams and services. All nurses at UWMC are *registered nurses* (RNs).

### **Allied Health Professionals**

There are many other health professionals who work with your doctors and nurses to provide the best possible care for you. They include:

#### **Dietitian**

A dietitian is an expert in food and nutrition. Your dietitian will assess your nutritional needs and advise your care team

about the best diet for you. When needed, dietitians also teach patients and their families how to follow any special diets after leaving the hospital. Registered dietitians have a bachelor's degree, and many have a master's degree.



*An occupational therapist can work with you to help improve your ability to do daily tasks, also called “activities of daily living,” or ADLs.*

### **Occupational Therapist**

An occupational therapist (OT) assesses how well you can do daily tasks such as dressing, bathing, and cooking, and works with you to improve your skills in these areas. These chores are also called “activities of daily living” (ADLs). An OT may also provide aids, devices, or equipment to help patients do ADLs. OTs are licensed and have a degree at the master's level or higher.

### **Pharmacist**

A pharmacist gives information to medical and nursing staff about the uses, dosage, and effects of medicines. All clinical pharmacists at UWMC have a PhD or Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Pharmacists also teach patients and their families about the medicines they will use during their stay and after they leave the hospital.

### **Physical Therapist**

A physical therapist (PT) assesses how well you can move around your environment. The PT suggests exercises, therapies, and/or medical equipment to help you safely move more easily and become stronger. The physical therapist and/or occupational therapist may also work with you on issues related to using a wheelchair, if needed. PTs are licensed and have a degree at the master's level or higher.

### **Recreation Therapist**

A recreation therapist assesses and/or designs activities to improve the physical, mental, emotional, and social functioning of people who are disabled after a trauma or disease. All recreation therapists have a bachelor's degree, are nationally certified, and are registered in the state of Washington.

## **Rehabilitation Counselor**

A rehabilitation counselor helps you with computer access and with your plans to return to work, school, or other activities. Computer access allows patients to stay in touch with friends and family, and allows students to continue with their school work. Rehabilitation counselors can also provide resources and career guidance, or help you set up volunteer work. They have a master's degree and a national certification.

## **Rehabilitation Psychologist/Neuropsychologist**

An attending rehabilitation psychologist will see you during your hospital stay. You can also meet with your psychologist after you leave the hospital to talk about adjustments and coping with injury and the changes you are facing. Your psychologist will work closely with you, your family, and the team to address issues such as life transitions, depression, anxiety, sexuality, pain management, sleep habits, and more. Your psychologist may also provide education for you and your family on your new condition.

Your psychologist may recommend *neuropsychological testing* while you're in the hospital if you have any problems with your memory, attention, problem-solving, or other thinking skills. Your psychologist may also recommend more extensive outpatient evaluation, depending on your situation. A *psychometrist*, who is an experienced testing technician, will give you these tests, if needed.

You may also see a *psychology fellow*, a psychologist with a PhD who is receiving specialized training in rehab psychology, or a *psychology resident*, who is completing PhD training. Both the fellow and resident are supervised by an attending psychologist.

## **Respiratory Therapist**

A respiratory care therapist (RT) assesses how well you can breathe, and treats you if needed. Your RT will work closely with your doctor and nurse to provide the best oxygen therapy, *secretion* (phlegm) removal therapy, and *pulmonary* (lung) diagnostic monitoring while you are in the hospital. If needed,

your RT will also arrange for you to have oxygen and other equipment when you go home. An RT is licensed and has national credentials.

### **Social Worker**

A social worker provides support and help with your discharge planning and can also help you with care coordination after you leave the hospital. Your social worker can talk with you about your discharge options and help you find resources for caregiver support, community support, and ongoing rehabilitation in your home or in an outpatient clinic. Your social worker can also help you coordinate with community health care providers and make referrals for continuing care. A social worker is licensed and has a master's degree.

### **Speech Therapist**

A speech therapist assesses how well you can learn, speak, swallow, and understand and use language (what you hear, read, say, and write). Speech therapists suggest methods or equipment to help you develop new ways to communicate, learn, or swallow. Speech therapists are licensed and have a master's degree.

### **Support Staff**

#### **Case Management Team**

Your case management team includes a **patient access coordinator** and an **inpatient case manager**. These members of your care team work with your insurance company to help with your admission to the rehab unit.

The inpatient case manager is the main contact with your insurance company after you are admitted to the hospital. This staff member also helps with continued authorization for your hospital stay, facilitates group team meetings, helps with documentation of care, and works closely with the social worker on discharge planning.

## **Environmental Services Staff**

These staff members clean your room every day, as well as the lounges and restrooms on your floor of the hospital.

## **Financial Services Counselor**

A financial services counselor can help you and your family understand your hospital bills. They also work with insurance companies, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and Medicare to make sure the hospital receives payment for services. If needed, they can help you apply for Medicaid. For directions to Financial Services, ask at the Information Desk on the 3rd floor. (See “Financial Issues,” page 43.)

## **Operation Supervisor**

The operation supervisor works closely with the nurse manager to help the rehab unit run smoothly. The operation supervisor makes sure that the non-medical needs of our patients and families are met. The operation supervisor also oversees the interactions between patients and staff.

## **Patient Services Specialist**

A patient services specialist (PSS) supports our patients and families in non-medical ways. A PSS gathers your daily menu choices, issues stickers for parking discounts, and is available at the front desk to answer basic questions. The PSS also does office work, answers the phone, and helps the doctors, nurses, and families with other hospital services.



*An patient services specialist will gather your daily menu choices.*

## **Peer Mentors for People with Spinal Cord Injury**

The peer mentor program is for people who have had a spinal cord injury. A peer mentor is a patient who has gone through something similar to what you are going through. You may be able to meet with a peer mentor in person.

If you would like to meet with a peer mentor, please talk with your rehab psychologist.

## Caregivers

Before you leave the hospital, it is important to decide who will be your primary caregiver. This may be your partner, a family member, or a long-time friend. One person may care for you short-term while you are finding a caregiver to hire.

Your caregivers' schedules will depend upon what works best for you. Some people have more than 1 caregiver at a time, or rotate between 2 or more caregivers. Others may need a caregiver for only a short time.

## Advocates

An advocate is someone who believes in you, the patient, and serves as your support and spokesperson. An advocate is someone who sticks up for you. A caregiver can also be your advocate, if that works well for both of you.

Your advocate:

- Is someone you choose, who is willing and able to act on your behalf.
- Is someone who can talk with and work with your health care team and your family.
- May be a partner, sibling, parent, child, or a trusted friend.

Your advocate may help with only 1 issue or many issues, only 1 time or many times, for a short time or a very long time. Some advocates may need to fill out paperwork, such as the durable power of attorney form.

## Others Who Can Support You

You may ask for help and support from a neighbor who does not otherwise help in your care or serve as an advocate. For example, your neighbor may be willing to bring in your mail and newspaper each day. Some patients have a trained service dog that helps with tasks of daily living.

There are also many services or groups in your community that can provide support. These include the MS Society, the Spinal Cord Injury Association of Washington, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Talk to your doctor, nurse, or other health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

While you are a patient on UWMC's inpatient rehab unit, call 8-4800 from your bedside phone. From outside the hospital, call 206-598-4800.

After discharge, call your primary care provider or UWMC's Rehabilitation Clinic: 206-598-4295