

Living With Brain Injury

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

Home of the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program (DVHIP)

March
2007

What is the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC)?

DVBIC is a group of seven traumatic brain injury (TBI) programs in Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and two civilian TBI rehabilitation programs. These DVBIC sites work collaboratively to provide and improve TBI care for active duty military and reserve component military personnel, veterans, and their eligible beneficiaries.

Our goal is to provide expert care coordination and individualized, evidence-based treatment for each patient in order to maximize function and decrease or eliminate TBI-related disability. We work together to provide services and supports to help the individual with TBI return to duty, work and community.

What are the risks and costs of traumatic brain injury (TBI) for military personnel and veterans?

- ♦ In prior conflicts, TBI was present in at least 14-20% of surviving combat casualties; preliminary information from the current conflict in the Middle East suggests that this number is now much higher.
- ♦ In peacetime, over 7,000 Americans with TBI are admitted to military and veterans hospitals each year.
- ♦ TBI is a major cause of life-long disability and death.
- ♦ Certain military assignments, such as airborne operations or policing in combat areas, carry above average risk for TBI.
- ♦ Blast injuries are a growing cause of TBI in combat.

How is DVBIC different from the National Institutes of Health and other brain injury research programs?

- ♦ DVBIC focuses on the well-being of those who put themselves in harm's way for our country.
- ♦ No other brain injury program conducts clinical studies with active duty and reserve component personnel.
- ♦ DVBIC offers specialized focus on the unique needs of military and veteran beneficiaries including return to duty considerations and continuity of care with military and veterans hospitals and TRICARE.

What type of care is available for persons with TBI through DVBIC sites?

Each facility provides brain injury evaluations. Each individual evaluated at a DVBIC site receives a comprehensive assessment that may include any of the following components:

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| ♦ Neurological evaluation | ♦ Psychiatric interview |
| ♦ Neuropsychological interview | ♦ Medical/social history interview |
| ♦ Neuropsychological testing | ♦ Audiology, EEG or MRI screening, as indicated |

Additionally, persons admitted to inpatient TBI rehabilitation programs at a VA site receive:

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| ♦ Physiatry assessment | ♦ Physical therapy |
| ♦ Occupational therapy | ♦ Speech therapy |
| ♦ Rehabilitation nursing | ♦ Cognitive therapy |
| ♦ Vocational assessment | ♦ Therapeutic recreation |
| ♦ Other rehabilitative therapies as indicated | ♦ Psychology |

Other evaluations (i.e., neuro-ophthalmology, dental, ear/nose/throat (ENT), vestibular [balance] testing and treatment, psychiatry, etc.) may be obtained if a need for these services is identified. Treatment is based on individual goals in a multi-disciplinary team setting. Persons who require community re-entry rehabilitation in a residential setting can receive it at our civilian partner sites, Lakeview Virginia NeuroCare in Charlottesville, VA and Laurel Highlands Neuro-Rehabilitation Center in Johnstown, PA.

TBI education is available. Visit DVBIC.org for downloadable brochures and other resources.

What value is added to a site's TBI program from being a part of DVBIC?

Collaboration with DVBIC enhances a site's:

- ♦ communication among member programs
- ♦ patient care coordination
- ♦ clinical care practice
- ♦ provider, patient and family education capability
- ♦ funding for TBI research
- ♦ access to collaborators for multi-site studies

Do DVBIC sites provide a specific set of treatments or services?

TBI results in a broad range of physical, cognitive, behavioral, emotional and social challenges. DVBIC sites provide a consistent standard of clinical care and rehabilitation. At the same time, each person has an individualized plan of care that addresses his/her needs. Persons with TBI have access to ongoing DVBIC clinical research trials.

Where are DVBIC sites located?

DVBIC sites are located at:

Military Treatment Facilities (MTF):

- ♦ Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC
- ♦ Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland Air Force Base, TX
- ♦ Naval Medical Center San Diego, San Diego, CA

Veterans Affairs (VA) Sites:

- ♦ Hunter McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, VA
- ♦ James A. Haley VA Hospital, Tampa, FL
- ♦ Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Minneapolis, MN
- ♦ VA Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, CA

Civilian Partner Sites:

- ♦ Lakeview Virginia NeuroCare, Charlottesville, VA
- ♦ Laurel Highlands Neuro-Rehabilitation Center, Johnstown, PA

Who can refer someone with TBI to DVBIC?

People with TBI who are served by TRICARE or VA benefits may be referred to DVBIC. Referrals are accepted from primary care and other physicians/health care providers, family members, and/or by self-referral.

How can you refer a patient to DVBIC?

You can contact the sites directly to begin the referral process, which includes a review of all related medical documentation, or you may contact headquarters at either 1-800-870-9244 or info@dvbic.org. Headquarters will direct your referral to the appropriate staff member.

Where can one learn more about brain injury and DVBIC?

Visit DVBIC.org for updates on clinical treatment, research, and educational programs/materials available from DVBIC. Our web site also has numerous links to other brain injury web sites.

