



# Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center PHYSICAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## PHYSICAL THERAPY CONTINUING EDUCATION

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**PURPOSE:** To describe method of access for use of the Physical Therapy Department Education Fund.

**POLICY:** Physical Therapy Department has established Education Funds, administered by the Chief of Physical Therapy and the Continuing Education Committee, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. These funds are available to Physical Therapy Department staff for professional meetings, conferences, and continuing education to enhance individual personal and professional development, and to achieve departmental objectives. Sources of monies are workshops, material sales and professional visitors. (Authorization for the fund is AB 452.).

The Physical Therapy Department strongly supports continuing education for all staff including physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, rehab therapy technicians, clerks, and supervisors. Education activities are supported with the goal of enhancing patient care, professional development, and/or the vision and mission of the Physical Therapy Department and of Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center (RLANRC).

**Note: The PT Department education funds and County travel training funds and covered county time are prohibited from use for travel to locations with a travel ban issued by the County of LA, Board of Supervisors, DHS or RLA leadership.**

### Staff Eligibility for Continuing Education Funding:

Employees must meet the following criteria to be eligible to submit for and receive funding for continuing education events:

1. Employee has passed the probationary period for employment (6 months from employee “start date”) and is on permanent status. A work force member on contract or registry may be approved for a training activity if it is deemed to meet a department required need.
2. Employee is performing job duties at a competent level and is maintaining productivity standards.

**Eligible Continuing Education Events:**

Continuing Education funding may be approved for the following events / activities:

1. Registration fees for courses or portions of courses (including online and webinars), seminars, conferences or other professional events. Application exam fees or portions of fees for the following specialty exams :
  - a. APTA Specialty Board Certification
  - b. RESNA credentialing for Assistive Technology Practitioner

**Ineligible Continuing Education Events:**

Continuing Education funding **will not** be approved for the following events / activities:

1. P.T. Legislative days
2. Physical Therapy Licensing examination or renewal fees
3. Professional or other membership fees
4. Materials associated with examinations

**Waiver of Registration Notification:**

Employees may not accept waiver of registration fees, travel funds, monetary or other incentives from any vendor or other entity pursuant to Administrative Policy No.: A229, Conflict of Interest.

**Prior to Requesting Continuing Education Funding:**

1. Employee will ensure that the continuing education event is consistent with the mission and vision of the physical therapy department and/or the hospital
2. Employee will arrange for coverage of patient care responsibilities and collaborate with supervisor to ensure patient coverage need are met.

**Submission of Continuing Education Request:**

Complete forms as follows:

1. Vacation Request form: Requests for time to attend continuing education are considered equal to vacation requests. Approval of time off will follow the same guidelines established for determining vacation time off with the exception of using the annual allotment of days allocated to vacation as a limiting factor. This includes considerations of coverage needs for patient care, census, and max number of people off in a day. Time for online coursework occurring during normal working hours must also be preapproved.
2. Travel & Training Estimate Request Form.pdf:

- a. Used to request salary (County time) to attend event and to request County funds for event and expenses.
  - b. Must be submitted to Physical Therapy Office **5 weeks** prior to the event.
  - c. **Salary Request:** Complete top section to request approval of Salary Request (time to attend event).
  - d. **Travel Advance Request, Registration Fees, Airfare, Lodging, Meals, Car Rental, Ground Transportation Cost, Capital City Allowance:** Leave this section blank unless you have advance approval by RLA Administration to request County funding to attend the event.
3. RRI Continuing Education Fund - Educational Request form.doc or Foundation Funding request form:
- a. Used to request funds for registration and other expenses from RRI Continuing Education fund or from the Foundation Education Fund.
  - b. Must be submitted to Physical Therapy Office **2 weeks** prior to the event if not requesting Salary / County time to attend the event or **5 weeks** prior to the event if also requesting salary.
  - c. Complete form sections as appropriate to educational request need.

Applicant will obtain Clinical Manager initials on request forms and then submit all paperwork to the physical therapy office for approval.

Approval Procedure / Definition of Employee Continuing Education Benefit:

The Physical Therapy Department Director or designee will receive and consider all requests for funds and approved time to attend continuing education. The benefit available to an individual staff member in a Calendar year will be determined as follows:

1. **Salary / County Time:** Amount of County paid time off to attend management approved continuing education is defined in each represented employee's MOU and differs slightly according to the employee item. Physical Therapist (PTs) represented by the union may request a minimal of 36 hours of paid time off over the term of the contract (or up to the number of hours required to satisfy continuing education licensure requirements. Physical Therapist Assistants may request equivalent time to continuing education licensure requirements. Approval of request for time off is at the discretion of the Department Director.
2. **County Funds:** Benefit is undefined in MOU. Funds require CEO approval and will be granted based on criteria described by the Director of Department of Health Services.
3. **Rancho Research Institute (RRI) Continuing Education Funds and Foundation Education Funds:** Funds require approval of Director of Rehabilitation Therapy Department and will be granted as the account allows as follows:

- a. Current APTA membership is required to qualify for funding.
  - b. Annual benefit based on time in service at beginning of calendar year and availability and sustainability of the fund:
    - i. 6 months:
    - ii. 2 years:
    - iii. 5 years:
  - c. Physical Therapy Director will consider requests for funding that exceeds an individual's defined benefit on a case-by-case basis. Consideration is given when the department requests the training specifically or if the request is in relation to a department specific need.
  - d. Employees may not carry over any unused benefit from one calendar year to the next.
  - e. The RRI and Foundation funds are limited and must be conserved for sustainability. Therefore, the funds will be used for critical expenses related to the training activity such as registration, airfare transportation and/or hotel accommodations. Reimbursement is not to exceed the annual allotment even if the staff member's expenses exceed the annual allotment with the exceptions identified in 3.c. Funds are not allocated for food, gas, tips or miscellaneous expenses associated with travel.
4. **Other Funds:** Funding is periodically available through other sources, such as from the union or from special grants. Employees will be directed to submit for funding through these sources first, when they are available.
5. **Selection process for conferences:**
- a. Dates for selected professional conferences are unavailable to staff during the annual vacation request process (blacked-out).
  - b. First priority will be granted to employees with professional responsibilities (presentations, receiving awards) and to employees who are attending committee meetings that are only held annually onsite at the conference. Employees may not request County time to attend legislative sessions or other political meetings.
  - c. All other requests to attend conference including attending other meetings will follow the same guidelines established for determining vacation time off and will be considered equal to those requesting time off for personal reasons

Reimbursement Procedures for Attended Continuing Education:

After Continuing Education coursework is completed, submit to Physical Therapy Office paperwork as follows:

1. **Proof of attendance:** Certificate or other proof of attendance is required (e.g. Conference badge, certificate of attendance/completion, or CEU certificate).

2. Proof of payment: Receipt is preferred identifying you as the payor. A copy of cashed check, checking account verification or credit card statement may be sufficient but are subject to RRI and Foundation approval. If these are used -- black out information as needed for privacy.

Information Sharing Obligations:

Employees are required to provide in-service education to the therapy department or other appropriate staff based on the information gained from the continuing education event. Staff will conduct a training session or other presentation with the following goals:

1. Allow for broad dissemination of new information and introduce new skills and evidence into practice.
2. Suggest strategies to create new programs or to integrate new knowledge into existing programs.
3. Allow staff to integrate new knowledge through teaching.
4. Expand the presentation opportunities for staff.

Ref: Continuing Education Policy 2008 v2.doc

  
Director, Physical Therapy Department