

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

Communication Disorders Department Policy and Procedure

SUBJECT: PRIORITIES FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES

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Page: 1 of 2

PURPOSE

To define priorities for provision of services.

POLICY Treatment Priorities

In order to ensure the timely delivery of services to patients, the speech-language pathologist will utilize the criteria listed below to determine:

1. which patients may, and which may not, benefit from therapy
2. what the frequency, amount, duration and format of treatment (i.e., individual, group or combination) will be

PROCEDURES

A. Prognostic indicators

A combination of the following prognostic indicators will be used to determine which patients are considered higher priority:

1. recent onset
2. medical stability
3. actively involved family/friends/caregivers
4. discharge plan requiring higher level of independence (e.g., home, school, work, etc.)
5. Pre-onset history of high level of independence

B. Evaluation and treatment procedures priorities

Speech-Language Pathologist will utilize the following general priorities to schedule procedures, while considering extenuating circumstances:

- a. Dysphagia Evaluations
- b. Communication Disorders Evaluations
- c. Family Conferences and Training
- d. Dysphagia Treatment
- e. Communication Disorders Treatment

Patients with the following characteristics will be considered a lower priority:

1. severe to profound impairment or diagnosis of severe progressive neurological disease with limited potential to respond to therapy
2. discharge placement requires low level of independence (e.g., nursing home, state hospital, etc)
3. extended length of time post onset
4. repeated refusal of treatment
5. prolonged coma or semicoma state
6. documented premorbid psychiatric disorder which currently significantly interferes with rehabilitation program
7. medical instability
8. documented failure to respond to therapeutic interventions

C. Development and Review of Wait lists

1. Inpatient
 - a. Each Speech-Language Pathologist Supervisor is responsible for ensuring most efficient staff coverage of patient care needs (See Policy #114 Staffing Plan). When available staff time is insufficient to meet patient care needs, patients who are determined to be lower priority (based on above criteria) may receive reduced frequency or amount of treatment. Patient care needs are reviewed on a daily basis by the supervisor and staff. Staff takes every effort to ensure each patient receives the recommended amount and frequency of services (e.g. request speech pathologists from other services to assist with coverage).
2. Outpatient
 - a. The above criteria are utilized in determining the appropriate provision of services to outpatients
 - b. Outpatients who are placed on a waiting list will be provided with referrals for other appropriate treatment alternatives, as appropriate.
 - c. Outpatient waiting lists are reviewed by the supervisor and staff on a weekly basis.