



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

PHYSICAL THERAPY CONTINUING EDUCATION

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

POLICY: The Physical Therapy Continuing Education Fund, established and administered by the Continuing Education Committee, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, is 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 and professional visitors who come for specialized training. (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 will be 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).

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.
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 (including online and webinars), seminars, conferences or other professional events. Application exam fees for the following specialty exams:
 - a. APTA Specialty 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 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 to 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 is 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. 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 to request County funding to attend the event.
3. RRI Continuing Education Fund - Educational Request form.doc:
 - a. Used to request funds for registration and other expenses from RRI Continuing 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) 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 hours equivalent 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 Continuing 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:
 - 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.
 - d. Employees may not carry over any unused benefit from one calendar year to the next.
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 at 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. Time Card: Choose appropriate training code for approved time off on days attended.
2. Proof of attendance: Certificate or other proof of attendance is required (e.g. Conference badge or certificate of attendance/completion).
3. Proof of payment: Receipt, copy of check or credit card statement (black out information as needed for privacy)

Information Sharing Obligations:

Employee is expected to provide in-service to the therapy department or other appropriate staff, the information gained from the continuing education event. Staff will conduct a training session or other presentation with the following goals:

1. To 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. To allow staff to integrate new knowledge through teaching.

Ref: Continuing Education Policy 2008 v2.doc



Director, Physical Therapy Department