



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Burn Model System Newsletter

Winter 2010



What is Vocational Rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation can be defined as an integrated set of professional services to improve functional outcomes related to disability as a consequence of disease, defect or trauma (such as a burn injury). Improved employment outcomes are an important aim of

rehabilitation. Rehabilitation services can be targeted toward medical, vocational and/or social rehabilitation domains.

Vocational rehabilitation services are intended to assist people with disabilities to enter or re-enter employment, or to retain or advance

in employment.

Harborview's Burn Center is one of only a few centers in the country with a dedicated vocational rehabilitation counselor. Read the Provider Profile below to learn more about these services and what that means for our patient population.

Burn Injury Information Group

The burn injury informational support group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 1-2:00pm in room 8EH-50 at Harborview Medical Center. This

group is open to all burn survivors and their families.

Upcoming meetings are January 20th, February 17th, March 17th, 2010. It is sponsored by the

Northwest Burn Foundation and is at no charge. You can also participate by phone; contact Dr. Shelley Wiechman at 206-744-4439 and she will provide all necessary information.

Provider Profile - Sabina Brych

Sabina Brych is the vocational rehabilitation counselor for the University of Washington/Harborview Burn Center (HMC). Sabina has worked with burn survivors since 1994. Originally, this position was funded through a NIDRR grant and in 2002, the position was completely funded by Harborview.

Sabina works with burn survivors to assist with various issues pertaining to employment, school and community re-entry following hospital discharge.

On a daily basis, she consults with the burn team in determining when it is appropriate to return to work or school; provides advice and assistance in navigating the Labor & Industries worker's compensation system; provides assistance with the identification of needed job

accommodations; and provides suggestions for dealing with identified employment or school barriers.

"We are fortunate to have Sabina as a member of our burn care team. She provides a much needed and important service for our patients," says Dr. Loren Engrav (primary investigator of the NIDRR Burn Model System grant and past Associate Director of the UW/HMC Burn Center).

Recently, Sabina authored a survey to determine current vocational rehabilitation services in burn centers within North America. The findings from this study will be shared with other burn center clinicians and hospital administrators in the United States as well as published in a professional medical journal.

Research Update

With funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), the University of Washington, in conjunction with two other burn centers, studied barriers to returning to work after a burn injury. We found that nearly 80% of patients returned to work by 1 year following their injury. Physical and wound related issues were barriers early after hospital discharge; psychological and social issues became important issues in those with more more long-term disability.

Dr. Peter Esselman, Rehabilitation Medicine, was the study primary investigator. The other burn centers who participated in this study were Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore) and the University of Texas Southwestern (Dallas).

Study findings have been published in the *Journal of Burn Care & Research*. Visit our website for more information - <https://depts.washington.edu/uwnidrr/>

Did You Know?

That of all patients admitted to U.S. burn centers, 70% are men.

(American Burn Association National Repository Data, 2005)

Visit our website at

<https://depts.washington.edu/uwnidrr/> for more information.

To reach the UW/HMC Burn Center Clinic, call 206-744-5735.