Eisenhower's Inpatient Rehabilitation Center

Region's First and Only to Earn Prestigious Three-Year Accredation

By: Roxanne Jones

Eisenhower's Inpatient Rehabilitation Center — the newest and largest center of its kind in the Valley — recently achieved another milestone, becoming the only facility in all of Riverside County to earn a three-year accreditation from the national Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF is an independent, non-profit accrediting body whose mission is to promote quality, value and optimal outcomes through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the people served.

Open for just over a year, the Eisenhower Inpatient Rehabilitation Center provides an intensive level of rehabilitative care for people who are recovering from stroke, brain injury, spinal cord dysfunction, amputation, joint replacement, and neuromuscular, arthritic and other conditions that have compromised their independence.

"This accreditation really is a big deal," says Michael Weinstein, MD, Medical Director of the Eisenhower Inpatient Rehabilitation Center. "We had to meet nearly 1,200 very high international standards of quality in our service areas and business practices. It usually takes an institution a minimum of one year to prepare for the CARF review process, and we were able to do it in eight months."

To receive the three-year accreditation, Center staff participated in a rigorous review process during an on-site visit from CARF interviewers who looked at such areas as policies and procedures, quality-of-care indicators, financial processes, safety, and emergency plans and procedures. In addition, staff competencies and training, human resources processes, risk management, performance measurements and overall goals of the unit were examined.

"By having an outside agency review our medical and business practices, we're able to be transparent to the community about our claims of high quality care," he continues. "We are committed to the highest standards of patient care, and this accreditation affirms it."

"A hospital can have a rehabilitation unit that offers great care,but not every hospital can earn CARF accreditation," he adds.

"We provide a minimum of three hours of interdisciplinary rehabilitation services daily," Dr. Weinstein says. "This includes physical and occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, and recreational therapy along with 24-hour rehabilitation nursing care coverage and an array of other supportive services."

"Our average length of stay is 12 to 14 days for patients with a primary medical diagnosis of stroke, and we strive to discharge patients back to their homes instead of to another institution," he continues, underscoring the Center's emphasis on restoring patients' independence to as high a degree as possible. This commitment is paying off.

"In our first year of operation, over 90 percent of our patients were discharged to a home setting, and at three months post discharge, 90 percent remained at home," he adds, noting that this rate is higher than regional or national averages.

Prior to the opening of the Eisenhower facility, there were only 12 inpatient rehabilitation beds in the entire Coachella Valley — and none CARF-accredited. Patients and families faced the difficult decision of seeking inpatient care at a skilled nursing facility where they would receive much less intensive therapy, or traveling to rehabilitation units in San Diego or Riverside.

Eisenhower's 23-bed, state-of-the-art center fills this gap, providing intensive therapy from a multidisciplinary team of physical, occupational, recreational and speech therapists, rehabilitation nurses, physiatrists (medical doctors who specialize in physical and rehabilitation medicine), social workers, case managers, rehabilitation psychologists, dietitians and pharmacists.

Equipped with five private and nine semi-private rooms, the Center also has a large, open space for gait and transfer training, a training kitchen and bathroom, outdoor training space, a car module for transfer training, and cardio- and strengthtraining equipment.

"With our specially trained staff and state-of-the-art facility, patients receive the intense therapy they need to prepare themselves for daily living and to regain their independence and quality of life," Dr. Weinstein says. Each patient's treatment plan is tailored to his or her individual rehabilitation needs, based on what type of disease or accident caused the dysfunction, along with any limitations on activities or how the patient is able to resume living independently.

It's an approach that is attracting a growing number of referrals not only from within the Valley but also throughout Southern California, and from as far away as Northern California and Arizona. And the recent CARF accreditation is an important third-party validation that the Center is, indeed, a good choice.

"We're not resting on our laurels, however," Dr. Weinstein notes. To demonstrate its ongoing conformance to the CARF standards, the Eisenhower Inpatient Rehabilitation Center has developed a Quality Improvement Plan after receiving its survey report and will submit an Annual Conformance to Quality Report each year throughout the accreditation term.

"The CARF interviewers not only spoke with staff members about our operations but also with patients, families and referrers regarding their interaction with us and their level of satisfaction," he says. "We are constantly trying to utilize this feedback to improve our policies, procedures and outcomes because we want to provide the best possible care for all our patients.

"We have in place a process to achieve optimal outcomes and high levels of satisfaction among our patients and families and referring physicians," he adds. "CARF sets the bar high, and we're demonstrating that we can meet it."

For more information about the Eisenhower Inpatient Rehabilitation Center, please call 760-834-7870.

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