

Medical from carf INTERNATIONAL RehabConnection

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Welcome to ***Medical Rehab Connection***

We are often amazed and inspired by the incredible work of CARF-accredited organizations! In this newsletter, we will feature some of their accomplishments and innovative practices, as well as information on the CARF standards and accreditation process, resources, training, and opportunities to connect with your CARF colleagues.

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On With Life Named a 2012 Top Workplace

“I feel that I am making a difference in people's lives and my ideas are encouraged and praised” is how one employee responded to the question of what was most liked about the job. Many similar sentiments recently led to [On With Life \(OWL\) Brain Injury Specialists](#), based in Ankeny, Iowa, being named an Iowa Top Workplace by the *Des Moines Register*. Based on the belief that the most successful companies are the ones that employees believe in, the top workplaces program partners with 30 [leading publishers across the country](#) to recognize companies that inspire employees and “give them room to do great things.” Evaluations for the top workplaces list are based exclusively on the opinions of employees. OWL was ranked in the top 35 midsize companies in Iowa.

Founded by a group of survivors and their families, OWL's mission is “joining hands, hearts,

and minds to help persons living with brain injury get on with life.” This is accomplished through the provision of postacute specialty services for persons with traumatic brain injury and other neurological disorders. OWL has been accredited by CARF for almost two decades and is currently one of six organizations with an accredited inpatient rehabilitation program in a skilled nursing setting that specializes in brain injury. It is also accredited for brain injury home and community services and the governance standards. “CARF is part of everything we do,” says Julie Dixon, M.S., CRC, CCM, executive director. “Adherence to the standards has truly shaped how we do business.”

As an organizational leader and CARF surveyor, Julie is fluent in how, as she puts it, standards provide an entrée into topical areas that need to be addressed. Specific to its human resource practices, Julie describes how the CARF standards have lead OWL to systematically develop brain injury-specific competencies for every professional and review those as part of each performance evaluation, establish and annually evaluate measurable performance objectives for personnel, enhance its volunteer program by making it a partnership and evaluating how well it’s working for all parties, develop new employee orientation that incorporates the CARF standards and how they are implemented, and the list goes on. OWL’s last survey team recognized these areas related to human resource practice:

- The newly developed Pediatric Team Resources Book is outstanding and comprehensive, containing the latest and most current articles, research, and information concerning the pediatric population and adolescents with brain injury. The resources book includes appropriate assessment tools and specific, comprehensive pediatric competencies.
- OWL is committed to training, education, and mentoring of new staff members so training and inservices are ongoing and comprehensive. The redesigned staff competency checklists, especially for nursing positions, are comprehensive and outstanding. OWL encourages and supports staff members in obtaining status as certified brain injury specialists through the Brain Injury Association of America (BIA).

Beyond the impact to internal operations, Julie adds that meeting standards pushes OWL to stay on top of what is happening externally. In another example recognized by the last CARF survey team:

- OWL is commended for its commitment and dedication to brain injury education and prevention and for advocating for appropriate services for individuals with brain injury. The executive director and neuropsychologist are members of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Brain Injuries. Staff members speak regularly within the state and local region regarding advocacy and education, and OWL has sponsored its own brain injury education conference for many years. Staff participated in the Day on the Hill at the state capitol to advocate for services for individuals with brain injury. The executive director and other staff members have served as president for the BIA of Iowa for many years, and OWL is a major corporate sponsor of the state association.

Embracing the CARF standards has elevated the level of attention given to topics that might be pushed aside in the bustle of daily activity at an organization like OWL. Julie’s advice: Make the standards fundamental to what you do and make sure you are living them.

As another employee expressed, “their knowledge about our field of brain injury rehabilitation

and their commitment to the people we serve” are what she likes most about her job. Undoubtedly, the persons served and their families would also attest to OWL’s unwavering commitment to excellence.

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Preview of New Standards for 2013

In keeping with CARF’s ongoing efforts to revitalize and update standards, the *2013 Medical Rehabilitation Standards Manual* will include revised standards for Brain Injury Specialty Programs and Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Programs. The International Standards Advisory Committee convened in the spring of 2012 to propose each set of standards. The draft standards were then posted for field review with the feedback used to finalize the standards, intent statements, examples, and resources. The 2013 standards become effective for site surveys July 1, 2013.

By design, revised and new standards are intended to raise the bar and increase rigor, ultimately increasing quality for persons served by accredited programs/services and their families. Here is a preview of the new program descriptions for 2013.

Brain Injury Specialty Program Description

A Brain Injury Specialty Program delivers services that focus on the unique medical, physical, cognitive, communication, psychosocial, behavioral, vocational, educational, accessibility, and leisure/recreational needs of persons with acquired brain injury. The program integrates services to:

- Minimize the impact of impairments and secondary complications.
- Reduce activity limitations.
- Maximize participation, including wellness, quality of life, and inclusion, in the community.
- Decrease environmental barriers.
- Promote self-advocacy.

A Brain Injury Specialty Program recognizes the individuality, preferences, strengths, and needs of the persons served and their families/support systems. It provides access to information, services, and resources available to enhance the lives of the persons served within their families/support systems, communities, and life roles and supports their efforts to promote personal health and wellness and improve quality of life throughout their lifespan.

The program demonstrates the commitment, capabilities, and resources to maintain itself as a specialized program for persons with acquired brain injury. A Brain Injury Specialty Program utilizes current research and evidence to provide effective rehabilitation and supports future improvements by advocating for or participating in brain injury research.

A Brain Injury Specialty Program partners with the persons served, families/support systems, and providers from emergency through community-based services to foster an integrated system of services that optimizes recovery, adjustment, inclusion, participation, and

prevention. A Brain Injury Specialty Program engages and partners with providers within and outside of rehabilitation to increase access to services by advocating for persons who have sustained a brain injury to regulators, legislators, educational institutions, research funding organizations, payers, and the community at large.

A program seeking accreditation as a Brain Injury Specialty Program must include in the Intent to Survey and the site survey all portions of the program (Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation Program, Outpatient Medical Rehabilitation Program, Home and Community Services, Residential Rehabilitation Program, and Vocational Services) that the organization provides and that meet the program descriptions.

Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Program Description

An Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Program provides outcomes-focused, coordinated, goal-oriented interdisciplinary team services. The program delivers services that focus on the unique needs of persons with persistent pain, including:

- Minimizing impairments and secondary complications.
- Reducing activity limitations.
- Maximizing participation and quality of life.
- Decreasing environmental barriers.

An Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Program recognizes the individuality, preferences, strengths, and needs of the persons served, their families/support systems, and other stakeholders. The program encourages appropriate use of healthcare systems and services by the persons served and their families/support systems and supports their efforts to promote personal health and wellness and improve quality of life throughout their lifespan. The program provides ongoing access to information, services, and resources available to enhance the lives of the persons served within their families/support systems, communities, and life roles.

An Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Program fosters an integrated system of care that optimizes prevention, recovery, adaptation, inclusion, and participation. The program utilizes current research and evidence to provide effective rehabilitation and supports future improvements in care by advocating for or participating in pain research.

A program seeking accreditation as an Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Program must include in the Intent to Survey and the site survey all portions of the program (inpatient, outpatient, etc.) that the organization provides and that meet the program description.

If you will be surveyed after July 1 for either of these programs, be sure you prepare using the standards in the 2013 standards manual. We invite you to take advantage of the CARF resources available to you such as [publications](#); [educational events](#), including CARF 101s, webinars, and presentations by CARF staff at various conferences and professional meetings; and technical support from the CARF staff member assigned to your organization: Mary Jo Fitzgerald, mfitzgerald@carf.org, ext. 7148; Carol Imler, cimlcr@carf.org, ext. 7102; Karen Kloter, kkloter@carf.org, ext. 7190; Cathy Rebella, cerebella@carf.org, ext. 7132.

If you have access to Customer Connect, CARF's website for accredited organizations and organizations seeking accreditation, you may also identify and email your CARF resource

specialist from the page My Company Profile. We look forward to working with you!

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Speaking of Standards Development

If you are not familiar with CARF's approach to standards development, it begins and ends with our stakeholders—provider organizations (both accredited and not); payers; regulators; surveyors; and, most importantly, persons served and their families/support systems. All requests to develop new standards and suggestions to revise existing standards are reviewed against CARF's mission of enhancing the lives of persons served, the moral owners of CARF.

There are a variety of opportunities for you to participate in the standards development process, such as:

- Communicating to CARF trends in the field that inform the need for standards development.
- Identifying content experts to serve on an identified International Standards Advisory Committee.
- Providing your feedback on proposed standards through the field review.
- Providing your feedback on existing standards; e.g., how a standard could be clearer or resources and examples to support the standards.

Here is an immediate opportunity for you to participate! CARF has been approached with a request to develop standards for cancer rehabilitation. Please email csolochek@carf.org by February 1, 2013, with your response to these questions:

- Do you provide a specialty program or services to people with cancer?
- Do you think there is a need to develop standards for such a program?
- Would you seek accreditation for a cancer specialty program if the option is developed?

Your participation is appreciated!

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Interested in Becoming a CARF Surveyor?

Medical Rehabilitation is in need of surveyors with expertise in the following areas:

- Administrative Surveyors – all programs and settings
- Program Surveyors with current experience in:

- o Brain Injury Programs (inpatient, outpatient, residential rehabilitation, home and community services, or vocational services)
- o Spinal Cord System of Care
- o Residential Rehabilitation
- o Home and Community Services
- o Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation Programs in skilled nursing facility or long-term acute care hospital settings
- o Pediatric Specialty Programs

If your organization is accredited and you, or a colleague, are interested in becoming a CARF surveyor, please see this [link](#) to read more about the criteria for and benefits of becoming a surveyor.

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If you have suggestions for content to be included in a future issue of *Medical Rehab Connection*, please email the editor, Cindy Solochek at csolochek@carf.org.

Please include the carf.org domain on your safe-senders list to ensure *Medical Rehab Connection* and other important emails from CARF are not blocked by spam filters.

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