

BAMC designates clinic for Warriors in Transition

By Jen Rodriguez

Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

To enhance care for Warriors in Transition, Brooke Army Medical Center Family Medicine Services has converted the BAMC Medical Examinations and Flight Medicine clinic in Family Medicine Services to the Warrior in Transition Primary Care Manager Clinic.

Medical Exam and Flight Medicine returned to the McWethy Troop Medical Clinic, where it had been until 2003.

“The arrangement really makes the work that we do in this clinic appear set apart and special,” said Dr. Sara Pastoor, chief, Department of Family and Community Medicine. “We feel this is a major improvement in convenience for our customers and other members of the health-care team, as well as for us.

“Our goal was to provide the Warriors in Transition with their own geographic footprint with their own private check-in area, waiting area, entrance and offices; the changes will enhance efficiency, customer service and customer satisfaction.”

Before the renovations, the WT PCM Clinic was enveloped in the Family Medicine Services, BAMC clinic, which saw more than 300 BAMC patients each day.

“The staff assigned to the Warrior in Transition Clinic (clerks, nurses, providers) are dedicated to this mission only, yet they were sharing space with the rest of the clinic, which made it difficult for our customers (patients, their Family members and attendants, case managers, squad leaders) to know who to go to for what,” said Pastoor.

“WT clerks were mixed in with the ‘big clinic’ clerks at a shared front desk with a shared waiting area, and clinical areas were buried in a maze of halls and offices,” she said. “It was a little confusing for case managers and squad leaders to find the PCMs and support staff when they needed assistance, and for the patients to find their way around.”

WT PCM clinic officer-in-charge, Dr. (Capt) Jeffery Robertson echoed Pastoor’s remarks. “Before the waiting room and check-in improvements, warriors were in the same waiting area as the other patients. Sometimes warriors took more time checking in. Now, the clerks are out in front and more accessible to the warriors.”

Robertson said the new clinic is a definite improvement with the area dedicated to meet the warriors’ needs. “Some of the dedicated services offered in the clinic include a dedicated physician, clinical pharmacologist and a social worker in behavioral health,” he said.

Current improvements include a sole entrance to the clinic dedicated to the warriors and their Family members, which will have an automatic handicap plate. Also, office and clinical space have been placed directly behind the check-in area, which makes it easier for patients to navigate, and for other BAMC staff to locate the clinic staff for consultation and coordination of care.

Although the clinic is up and running, there are still more renovations to come.

“I don’t expect work to be complete for another month or so, but we are proceeding with the move now since all other systems are ‘go,’” Pastoor said. “The rate-limiting step has been the wait for the space at McWethy to be complete and ready for move in by Medical Exams and Flight.”

Widening the sidewalks at the entrance to accommodate wheelchairs and assistance devices, installing handrails and a canopy over the walkway, and placing signage to clearly define the area are just some of the upcoming renovations.

“Patients will have a generous waiting area for them and their Family members only. The clerks supporting this clinic will be the only ones at the check-in desk, which will facilitate coordination of care for patients seeking and receiving care, case managers, squad leaders, consultants, and anyone who needs to interface with the clinic staff,” said Pastoor.

Also, she said there are male and female single-user, handicap-accessible latrines in the waiting area.

Robertson said it’s a work in progress. “We’re fine-tuning some areas, and looking how we can continue to improve. Our goal is to take care of our patients to meet the unique needs of the warriors,” he said.

The WT PCM clinic is located across from the main Emergency Department entrance en route to Family Medicine and the Pharmacy, first floor, near parking lot D.

Cutline:

Photo by Jen Rodriguez

Warrior in Transition Staff Sgt. Jason Eichelman checks in at the front desk of the Family Medicine Services’ Warrior in Transition Primary Medical Clinic under the watchful eye of Nelda Melo-Martinez, medical support assistant. Since the renovations, the check-in desk is more accessible to Warriors in Transition.