



## **CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY POSTDOCTORAL RESIDENCY WITH SPECIALIZATION IN NEUROREHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGY**

Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center  
Department of Health Services-Los Angeles County

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APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY **DECEMBER 1, 2020**  
TO BEGIN TRAINING **SEPTEMBER 1, 2021**

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Rancho Los Amigos is a nationally acclaimed 150 bed comprehensive physical rehabilitation and acute care medical center located in Downey, California. Rancho is one of six hospitals and medical centers operated by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services and is also a major training center for allied health professionals from across the nation. Rancho is located approximately 10 miles from the beautiful Pacific coastline and 11 miles from downtown Los Angeles.

### **CLINICAL TRAINING GOALS**

The Department of Psychology offers a clinical training program at the residency level in *Clinical Psychology with Specialization in Neurorehabilitation Psychology*. The Department views the primary practice goals of the Clinical Neurorehabilitation Psychology specialization as the following:

- 1) Intervention and treatment of psychological conditions associated with physical disorders.
- 2) Diagnosis and removal or remediation of psychological and neuropsychological barriers that restrict the patients' availability to medical care and the physical rehabilitation process.
- 3) Assist individuals in the development of compensatory behaviors and adjustment to catastrophic loss and physical trauma.
- 4) Prevention of further injury or deterioration through enhancement of compliance with rehabilitation and medical treatment goals.
- 5) Reintegration of the patient into his or her unique family, school/work, social-cultural and leisure time milieu.

Clinical Psychology offers excellent preparatory training that fits well within the Clinical Neurorehabilitation specialization. Rehabilitation relevant areas of clinical psychology training include:

- 1) Assessment directed toward diagnosing the nature and causes, and predicting effects of, psychological and neuropsychological dysfunction and subjective distress on the patients' functional ability.
- 2) Application of methods and procedures for alleviating or remediating cognitive, emotional, and behavioral disability.
- 3) Treatment of psychological and emotional factors involved in, and consequent to, physical disease and disability.

4) Investigation and treatment of family, group, and community dynamics as they impact the psychological health and recovery of the patient.

#### **PATIENT POPULATION: MEDICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS**

Rancho's patient population tends to be medically complex. In addition to experiencing physical disability they often also have a premorbid mental health history or will develop psychological distress due to onset of disability. Psychological diagnostic categories include but are not limited to: neurocognitive disorders, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, adjustment disorders, substance-related and addictive disorders, personality disorders, and mental disorders due to medical condition.

Postdoctoral residents are exposed to a wide range of experiences that include psychological, neuropsychological, and psychoeducational testing, diagnostic interviewing, group and individual psychotherapy, consultation, crisis evaluation, neurobehavior management, in-service education, and outpatient follow-up. Residents have the benefit of formal clinical instruction, weekly Psychology Department didactic training seminars, and access to a medical center wide lecture and seminar calendar. There is a medical library on campus and the Rancho Los Amigos Language and Cultural Center provides translation and interpretation services for non-English speaking patients. Residents interact with a patient population rich in cultural and individual differences and medical diagnoses. This diversity is reflected in patients of different ages and gender, multiethnic and linguistic backgrounds, divergent social and economic conditions, and different life styles. Hospital staff similarly reflects this breadth of diversity as does Rancho leadership and the Los Angeles County Board of Directors.

#### **SUPERVISION & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Department of Psychology has eleven licensed clinical psychologists. The postdoctoral residency is under the direction of Aida Saldivar, Ph.D., ABPP (RP), Clinical Training Director and Fernando Gonzalez, Ph.D., ABPP (RP) - Chief of Psychological Services

Training supervisors are full-time staff clinicians with recognized expertise in geriatrics and pediatrics and the psychological diagnosis and treatment of special patient populations, such as those with stroke, traumatic brain injury, spine injury, diabetes, epilepsy, and other neurological conditions. Training supervisors reflect the diversity of the population served and within the department speak and provide psychological services in English, Spanish, Russian, Hindi, Telugu, German and Portuguese.

Approximately 70% of the resident's time is spent in patient care activities. Rancho Los Amigos is a pioneer in the development of interdisciplinary treatment team practice and there is a training focus that emphasizes the unique role of the psychologist as a member of such a team in an acute physical medicine and rehabilitation setting.

The Psychology Department endorses the "apprentice psychologist" training model. The resident is bound by mutual agreement to learn the profession of clinical psychology and is placed under the care of skilled clinicians for the purpose of learning the profession. To this purpose, the resident engages patients within the totality of the patient's psychological needs. That is to say, the resident's duties are not fragmented into isolated experiences such as intake interviews or psychological testing. Under

expert supervision, the resident engages the patient on all levels of psychological need. The supervisor and resident enter into a relationship of mentor and student that far exceeds the typically required four hours of supervision per week of training.

Medical specialties at Rancho Los Amigos are:

Adult and Pediatric Brain Injury  
Adult and Pediatric Spine Injury  
Neurology and Acute Stroke  
Gerontology and Stroke Rehabilitation

Limb Preservation/Ortho-diabetes  
Epilepsy Assessment Service  
Pressure Ulcer Management  
Chronic Medicine

The primary rotation is on the Stroke/Neurorehabilitation/Gerontology Acute Rehabilitation Service under the supervision of Dr. Aida Saldivar. Patients seen on this service include adult to geriatric with a variety of strokes and neurological conditions, such as multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barré Syndrome, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, neurocysticercosis, West Nile encephalitis, and tumor resections.

Potential secondary rotations include:

Limb Preservation/Ortho-Diabetes Surgical Service - Dr. Aida Saldivar.

Spinal Cord Injury Acute Rehabilitation Service - Dr. Raj Sainath, Dr. Beatriz Coca, Dr. Sophia Serpa

Pressure Ulcer Management Surgical Service - Dr. Kelli McSwan

Traumatic Brain Injury Acute Rehabilitation Service - Dr. Serina Hoover and Dr. Tatyana Jones

Pediatric Acute Rehabilitation Service - Dr. Serina Hoover

Chronic Medicine Service - Dr. Tatyana Jones

Ortho-Rehabilitation - Dr. Tatyana Jones and Dr. Serina Hoover

Spanish Epilepsy Assessment Service\* - Dr. Virginia Zuverza-Chavarria, Dr. Erica Martinez, Dr. Sophia Serpa

Adult Brain Injury Outpatient Day Rehab Clinic\* - Dr. Virginia Zuverza-Chavarria

Outpatient Psychotherapy\* - Dr. Charlotte Sykora

*\*indicates services that were halted/modified/affected by the pandemic*

## **PATIENT & STAFF DIVERSITY**

About half of patients served at Rancho are monolingual Spanish speakers and we serve a large number of other non-English speakers, thus our residents gain extensive experience in providing psychological services in collaboration with interpreters. Residents who are fluent in Spanish and interested in providing psychological assessment, neuropsychological assessment and psychotherapy in Spanish with monolingual Spanish speakers have the opportunity to do so with the following supervisors: Dr. Saldivar, Dr. Coca, Dr. Chavarria, Dr. Martinez, Dr. Serpa and Dr. Gonzalez.

## **COVID-19 & CLINICAL SERVICES**

During COVID-19 Pandemic clinical staff, including resident, are continuing to provide inpatient clinical services at bedside with use of PPE's. Trainees are not assigned to work with patients who are known to

be COVID+ or to be a Patient Under Investigation (PUI: patient suspected to be infected and awaiting test results). Didactic trainings and staff meetings are held virtually and social distancing is practiced throughout the hospital. All staff are required to wear a mask when on campus. Staff that provide clinical services/direct patient care are provided with a daily surgical mask to be used when working with patients; goggles and face shields are also available for any staff who wish to use them. Our department follows hospital guidelines as recommended by Los Angeles County Department of Health Services and Public Health and may change as the pandemic progresses.

[At time of this revision Outpatient Services are being provided via telehealth and modifications for outpatient neuropsychological assessments are being explored. As a result of the pandemic, the following virtual outpatient groups were developed and are open for resident training: Stroke Group, Brain Injury Group, Women's Group, Spinal Cord Injury Group.]

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Residents are selected by members of the Psychology Department Training Committee through competitive interview and evaluation of statements of interest and professional goals, academic transcripts, curriculum vitae, letters of recommendation, and review of application for employment with the County of Los Angeles. One resident position is available. Appointment is full time for the 12-month or 24-month academic year running from September 1st through August 31st. The training program is primarily inpatient rehabilitation with opportunities to provide outpatient services when appropriate. There is an opportunity to see patients from childhood through older adult. Residents may be assigned patient consults from the other medical specialty programs in addition to their primary and secondary rotations depending on service needs and interest of the resident. The resident position carries a stipend (\$38,391.36) with full health benefits, 12 paid holidays, sick time, free parking, and free breakfast and lunch in the hospital cafeteria.

### **Admission Requirements:**

The interview/selection process is divided into three phases. Each phase is designed to select those applicants who demonstrate intellectual talent, solid foundation in clinical casework, and mastery of basic psychological principles. Applicants should demonstrate self awareness and personal maturity, commitment to the well being of others, awareness, tolerance, and respect for cultural and individual differences, and clear identification with the profession of psychology and concern for its standing and functioning within the community.

**Phase I:** Pre-screening: Applicant materials are reviewed to assure they meet minimum requirements:

1. Completion, by the start of the residency, of requirements for a doctoral degree in psychology from a program accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) and the American Psychological Association.
2. Completion, by the start of the residency, of an internship (1500 hour minimum) in psychology that meets standards as set forth by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC). [Will follow APPIC guidelines on minimum hours acceptable due to

pandemic]

3. Doctoral study and internship within the area of Clinical Psychology, Clinical Rehabilitation Psychology, Health Psychology, Behavioral Medicine, or closely related field, as determined by review of academic transcripts and program description.

**Please be advised that at the time of application and acceptance into the program, you must be enrolled in your doctoral program.** To initiate the selection process, applicants should review the minimum requirements. If these appear to be satisfied, applicants are requested to mail the following documents to Dr. Aida Saldivar:

1. Curriculum Vitae
2. A statement of interest and professional goals
3. Official transcripts from graduate program
4. Three letters of recommendation, with at least one from the University faculty and one from an internship supervisor (accepted only from author in sealed and signed envelope)
5. Copies of internship evaluations (accepted only from the internship site in sealed and signed envelope)
6. Sample report (de-identified)

All application materials should be mailed and must be received before the deadline of 12/05/2020. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

#### **Phase II:** Interviews

Upon receipt of admission documents, interviews are scheduled. Due to the pandemic, all interviews this year will be conducted virtually.

At the interview, members of the clinical training staff further assess the applicant's preparation and qualifications and answer questions regarding Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center and the training program. Applicants should expect to be interviewed by the Chief of Psychology, Clinical Training Director and other potential clinical instructors/supervisors. Applicants will also have the opportunity to meet and speak with the current resident.

#### **Phase III:** For Selected Applicant, Formal Application for Employment

At the conclusion of the screening and interview process, the selected candidate will be invited to complete an application for employment with the County of Los Angeles, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. The candidate will be required to successfully complete FBI and DOJ background checks. On the basis of ratings given by the Department of Human Resources and the interview and selection process of the Department of Psychology, applicants are notified of their acceptance into the program.

Important Dates for Applicants for the Academic Year September 2021 through August 2022

**December 1, 2020:** Closing date for submission of application  
**January 7, 2021 through January 31, 2021:** Candidate interviews  
**February 5, 2021:** Notification of selection

**Where to Send Documents and for additional information:**

**Aida Saldivar, Ph.D., ABPP (RP), QME**  
**Clinical Training Director**  
**Psychology Department, OPB Room 2049**  
**Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center**  
**7601 E. Imperial Hwy,**  
**Downey, CA 90242**

**562-385-6314 (office); 562-385-6678 (fax)**  
**[Asaldivar@dhs.lacounty.gov](mailto:Asaldivar@dhs.lacounty.gov)**