

**CHAPTER 16:
POLY-TRAUMA &
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY**

POLYTRAUMA/TRAMUATIC BRAIN INJURY SERVICES

Blast injuries resulting in polytrauma and associated traumatic brain injury (TBI) are among the most frequent combat-related injuries from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Polytrauma is defined as injuries to multiple body parts or organ systems that result in physical, cognitive, psychological, and/or psychosocial impairments and functional disabilities. TBI is defined as physical injury to the brain, often caused by blows to the head or exposure to explosions.

Polytrauma and TBI can also occur as a result of non-combat types of injuries such as motor vehicles accidents. Because TBI is a common occurrence in polytrauma, a specialized system of care that addresses both is required within the VHA.

Providing care to active duty service members and veterans with polytrauma and traumatic brain injury (TBI) requires a closely integrated network of emergent, urgent, surgical, and rehabilitative care across the battlefield, military treatment facilities(MTF), and VHA facilities. These patients require rapid transition through the system of care to optimize when and where treatment is received.

The VA established the Polytrauma/TBI System of Care to ensure that returning war veterans with polytrauma/TBI injuries have access to the best of both modern medicine and integrative therapies for rehabilitation. This integrated nationwide network of rehabilitation programs proactively assesses and manages injuries in active duty service members and veterans through a matrix of rehabilitation components.

COATESVILLE VAMC is a Polytrauma Support Clinic Team (PSCT) site. The role of the PSCT is to provide rehabilitation services for veterans and active duty service members with mild and/or stable functional deficits from brain injury or polytrauma, and who need interdisciplinary outpatient care.

- A dedicated interdisciplinary outpatient team provides specialty rehabilitation care including evaluation, development of a treatment plan, interdisciplinary rehabilitation care, and long-term management of patients with on-going or changed rehabilitation needs.
- Nursing and social work case managers coordinate clinical and support services for patients and their families
- PSCTs conduct comprehensive evaluations of patients with positive TBI screen, and develop rehabilitation and community re-integration plans as indicated.

For Program Information, contact Polytrauma/TBI coordinator, David Richards (610) 384-7711 x 5663

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