

SLVHCS Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency Program

Overview of Program

Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency Program

Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System Physical Therapy Service offers licensed physical therapists a year-long advanced practice residency in Neurologic Physical Therapy.

Our residency program is in development status seeking accreditation by the American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education (ABPTRFE) as a post professional program for physical therapists in Neurology and is funded by the Office of Academic Affiliations. Located in the heart of New Orleans, Louisiana with a thriving diverse cultural scene, residents will enjoy full-time employment with benefits, completing 150+ hours of 1:1 mentoring with Neurologic and Orthopaedic Clinical Specialists and experienced clinicians across a variety of settings. Our program supports 1 resident annually. Residents who successfully complete the program are well-prepared and eligible to sit for the Neurologic Clinical Specialist (NCS) exam.

Mission and Goals

- Mission: To provide advanced education through mentoring, didactic instruction, evidence-based practice, and clinical experiences to promote board-specialization in neurologic physical therapy in order to elevate the care of our Veterans.

- Goals:
 - Develop advanced neurologic practitioners that are committed to providing excellence in neurologic physical therapy
 - Develop and deliver an advanced curriculum that integrates the mentor-mentee model of learning.
 - Contribute to the continued growth and advancement of knowledge in neurologic physical therapy
 - Serve as a neurologic physical therapy resource within professional, academic and social communities
 - Graduate physical therapists who exemplify professional excellence, commit to continued learning, and prepare to pursue ABPTS certification as an Neurologic Clinical Specialist
 - Establish and maintain ABPTRFE Accreditation of Neurologic Residency Program

Curriculum

The Neurologic Residency Program curriculum will align with the Neurologic Physical Therapy Description of Specialty Practice (DSP) and Description of Residency Practice (DRP) to ensure competency in knowledge-based areas and within clinical practice. The curriculum will consist of 5 Blocks didactic course work, mentored clinical practice, skill labs, observation in specialty clinics, teaching opportunities, analysis of research literature, clinical practical assessments, guided self-study, and self-assessments. The curriculum will consist of a variety of subject matter experts from within and outside of the Physical Therapy Department to further aid the development of advanced clinical practice along with providing opportunities for interprofessional collaboration. The five blocks and online training compliment weekly mentored advanced clinical practice in the area of neurologic physical therapy across settings.

- Acute
- ICU
- Community Living Center
- Outpatient

Clinical education will include interdisciplinary education with medical residents in PM&R and medical/procedural/specialty clinic observations such as the following.

- Spinal Cord Injury Clinic
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Clinic
- Polytrauma Clinic
- Stroke Clinic
- Multiple Sclerosis Clinic
- Movement Disorder Clinic
- Videonystagmography with Audiology
- EMG/NCS
- Pharmacological Spasticity Management/Pain Management
- Intrathecal Baclofen Trials
- Lumbar Puncture Trials for Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus

It is the intention of the program to support APTA Clinical Instructor credentialing and attendance at the Louisiana State PT Meeting and APTA Combined Sections Meeting within the residency unless in the case of unforeseen circumstances.

Residency Requirements

- US Citizenship
- Graduation from a CAPTE accredited program
- English language proficiency

- Unrestricted State Licensure to practice physical therapy in a State, Territory or Commonwealth of the US or the District of Columbia, or demonstrated plan to achieve licensure before the start date of the residency
- APTA and Neuro Section membership
- Case Presentations
- Journal club facilitator
- Medical resident Instructor for Physical Therapy Department
- Submission of Research Proposal
- In-service presentations
- Quarterly Peer Reviews
- 2 Written Exams
- At least 2 Live Patient Evaluations
- 3 Resident Competency Evaluation Instrument submissions
- Completion of all program requirements within a 12-month time frame

How to apply

Application Procedures:

Email Residency Program Director for the required application items and process of submission.

Susan.kurtz2@va.gov

Application Acceptance: October – March

Interview: Onsite/Virtual: January – April

Notification of Acceptance: No later than April 30

Program Begins: After July 4

Should you have any questions, please contact Susan Kurtz at susan.kurtz2@va.gov

Benefits

- Stipend salary provided by OAA
- Health insurance
- Paid leave days: 13 vacation; 13 sick; 11 federal holidays
- Personal workspace

- Office supplies/support personnel
- Medical Media services
- Medical Library access
- Free parking
- Teaching experience

Faculty

PT Residency Program Director

Susan Kurtz, PT, MPT, CWS, SCCE

Kurtz graduated from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona in 1993 with a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science and in 1997 with a Master's in Physical Therapy. She received her Certified Wound Specialist certification through the American Board of Wound Management in 2001. Her over twenty-year career started in the ICU/CCU at Southern Regional Medical Center in Jonesboro, GA. She spent one year as a traveling PT at Kindred Hospital in New Orleans where she led the expansion of the wound care department to include physical therapy introducing PT modalities in wound care. She continued her career at Kindred Hospital in New Orleans, and in 2002, was appointed the Wound Care Coordinator. In 2003, she was appointed Director of Rehabilitation at Kindred Hospital, managing a multidisciplinary staff of fifteen. During her time as Director of Rehabilitation, Susan assisted her team during Hurricane Katrina to relocate staff and within four months, reopen Kindred Hospital in New Orleans. Susan's wound care expertise crosses the life span, working as weekend coverage for burn and wound care at Children's Hospital in New Orleans from 1999-2006. In 2007, Susan expanded her provision of PT services to the pediatric population, working with infants and children, ages 0-20, at Crane Rehab Center and as a certified provider with the Early Intervention Program of Louisiana. Susan continues to work with the pediatric population; oftentimes, seeing clients through their entire course of care with developmental and neurological disease processes. Susan transitioned to serve the veteran population in 2015, establishing a new community-based outpatient clinic in Slidell. Susan continues to further her education: keeping abreast of the latest information in the field regarding wound care, evidenced based practice for the neurological population, maintaining her Lee Silverman Voice Treatment certification for the Parkinson's population, Kinesiotape certification and dry needling certification with continued competencies, along with progressing her knowledge in andragogy. Susan impacts future physical therapy practitioners by working as an adjunct faculty member at LSU Health DPT program in New Orleans, particularly through the Diagnosis and Management of the Integumentary System course. In 2016, Susan promoted to PT Clinical Specialist-Clinical Educator where she continues to advance knowledge of future physical therapy practitioners through clinical based learning opportunities. During her time at the VA, Susan has supervised seven students directly, increased academic agreements to nine universities, allowing for a more diverse student population, and counseled/onboarded forty-seven students for the entire PT program. She has expanded interdisciplinary education, bringing Tulane Medical School Neurology Clerkship Interprofessional Education course to the VA outpatient rehab clinic; medical students are provided one to one observation and education with experienced therapists to provided knowledge and understanding of

rehabilitation services. Currently, Susan works with veterans with progressive neurological disorders; during the pandemic, she played an integral role transitioning the BIG for LIFE group program through Lee Silverman Voice Training to a virtual telehealth platform.

Residency Program Coordinator

Natalie Pilie, PT, MPT, NCS

Natalie is a Board-Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist through the American Physical Therapy Board of Specialties (ABPTS). She graduated from the University of New Orleans with a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Physiology, Human Performance and Health Promotion. In 2007 she graduated from Louisiana State University Health Science Center with a Masters in Physical Therapy. She began her career as a Physical Therapist in 2007 at Touro Rehabilitation on an inpatient brain injury rehabilitation unit. In 2009, she was promoted to Brain Injury Program Supervisor in which she supervised speech language pathologist, occupational therapists, physical therapists and therapy technicians. She led many CARF accreditations and partnered with Louisiana State Troopers and University Medical Center to bring the Sudden Impact community outreach program to Touro. She has worked at Southeast Louisiana Veteran's Health Care System (SLVHCS) since 2016 in the outpatient setting specializing in rehabilitation of neurologic disorders. She is a member of the Brain Injury Association of Louisiana, the American Physical Therapy Association and the American Physical Therapy Association of Louisiana. She serves as a member on the Advisory Council for Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University Physical Therapy Program and as a guest lecturer at Louisiana State University Health Science Center New Orleans Physical Therapy Program. She has presented at numerous conferences at the local, national and VISN level. She presented at the 41st Academy Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium, the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses, VISN 16 Polytrauma Annual Conference and at Louisiana State University Medical Center medical resident lectures. She serves as the physical therapist representative for VISN 16 Polytrauma Network Site, was one of the two physical therapists at SLVHCS involved with neurology and the Office of Rural Health project "Using Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) to Provide Comprehensive Care to Rural Veterans with MS" since 2018. She is certified in Parker Indego exoskeleton and LSVT BIG. Interprofessional collaboration is a corner stone to her therapeutic interventions as she works closely with neurosurgery to assess effectiveness of baclofen trials, with audiology in the assessment of vestibular dysfunction, physical medicine and rehabilitation physiatrist on spasticity management, orthotists for fabrication of custom orthotics and other therapy services to ensure all aspects of rehabilitation are addressed. Additional education and areas of interest include vision therapy, vestibular dysfunction, stroke rehabilitation, brain injury rehabilitation and gait analysis.

Clinical Faculty

Rachel West, PT, DPT, NCS

Rachel graduated with her B.S. in Science of Food, Nutrition, and Exercise from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 2012 and received her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Old Dominion University in 2015. She became a certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist from the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties in 2019 while working at Touro Infirmery on the spinal cord injury rehabilitation unit. Rachel is a Level 1 Credentialed Clinical Instructor through the APTA Credentialed Clinical Instructor Program. She is a member of the Academy of Neurologic Physical Therapy and currently works as a staff physical therapist at SLVHCS on the medical-surgical and intensive care units. Her interests include locomotor training, balance and falls, and early mobilization.

Mary Geoghegan, PT, DPT, NCS

Mary is a Board-Certified Neurologic Specialist through the American Physical Therapy Board of Specialties. She graduated from Mississippi State University with a bachelor's degree in Physical Education, Clinical Exercise Physiology in 2010. From there, she attended the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Allied Health Professions where she received her Doctorate of Physical Therapy in 2013. Mary has been working in the field of neurological rehabilitation since 2013. She spent the first three years of her career working on a CARF accredited spinal cord injury inpatient rehab unit until transitioning to Southeast Louisiana Veteran's Health Care System (SLVHCS) outpatient physical therapy clinic where she continues to practice. She is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association and the neurologic section. She became a certified neurological clinical specialist (NCS) in 2019 and received an assistive technology practitioner (ATP) certification in 2021. Mary currently serves as the spinal cord injury physical therapist for the SLVHCS interdisciplinary SCI program. She was one of the two physical therapists at SLVHCS involved in Office of Rural Health project "Using Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) to Provide Comprehensive Care to Rural Veterans with MS" since 2018 and is a certified Parker Indego exoskeleton trainer.

Program Outcomes

We are a new program, following accreditation we will post the following outcomes:

Graduation rate

Specialty board pass rate

Retention employment within VHA Healthcare System