Roosevelt Warm Springs Rehabilitation and Specialty Hospitals

Background

President Franklin D. Roosevelt officially incorporated the Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation as a polio treatment center in 1927. With the eradication of polio, like most polio hospitals, Roosevelt Warm Springs changed its mission to the treatment of patients with physically disabling conditions and over the years, adding programs to include patients with complex, chronic medical conditions. For over eight decades, the organization provided both comprehensive medical and vocational rehabilitation to the citizens of Georgia.

As one of only eight state-managed rehabilitation centers in the country, clinical operations included the 52-bed Roosevelt Warm Springs Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital, which serves individuals who require an intense level of rehabilitation nursing and therapy care; and the 32-bed Roosevelt Warm Springs Long Term Acute Care Hospital, which specializes in the treatment of medically complex patients who are suffering from a recent catastrophic illness or medical complication related to chronic illness or injury causing a decline in physical function.

The rehabilitation and clinically complex programs were split into two distinct hospitals in the 1990s due to regulatory changes in the Medicare rules of participation. Until recently, the campus operated under the Department of Labor for the State of Georgia.

In 2012, Governor Nathan Deal’s budget moved the organization from the Department of Labor and established the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, administratively attached to the Department of Human Services. While this move provided both financial and managerial benefits to the vocational rehabilitation component of the campus, it was clear that for the medical facilities to thrive, additional management and clinical expertise would be necessary.

On July 1, 2013, through an interagency agreement, Augusta University (AU) took over management of the rehabilitation hospital and the long-term acute hospital at Warm Springs. A due diligence study process was undertaken from July 2013 – July 2014 aimed at understanding the operations and clinical needs of the organization. In July of 2014, a not-for-profit operating corporation was formed with the responsibility of providing day-to-day management of the newly formed Roosevelt Warm Springs Rehabilitation and Specialty Hospitals.

Today

The joint-commission accredited Roosevelt Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital (RWSHR) provides intensive rehab services in a caring compassionate atmosphere. RWSHR welcomes patients from all over the state of Georgia. The patients are referred primarily from acute care hospitals. Patients in a rehab facility participate in a very structured program including, building strength, endurance and self-care, while having medical issues managed. The goal is to prepare patients to return home and resume their lives. RWSHL also includes long-term acute care services. These patients are always admitted from an acute care hospital, often from intensive care or stepdown units, and longer length of stay, average of 25 days.

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At RWSH, the focus is on early intervention for conditions affecting mobility, activities of daily living, swallowing and cognitive abilities. The sooner patients begin their rehabilitation, the better the outcomes tend to be. Part of the day is devoted to follow-up medical care addressing ongoing medical issues and part of the day involves therapy to help the patient build up strength and skills. The Rehabilitation and LTAC Hospitals offer patients the opportunity to get necessary complex medical care while getting back on track with their lives. RWSH also offers psychological support as physical trauma can be emotionally draining.

Each patient in the Rehabilitation Hospital is served by an interdisciplinary team lead by a physician specially trained in physical medicine and rehabilitation. The physician provides daily medical and physical management with the rehabilitation registered nurses providing 24-hour care. Each patient’s treatment program is individualized and modified according to the process made toward discharge goals.

The families and primary caregivers are very important members of the team and are encouraged to interact with the team, ask questions and attend education sessions. Planning for discharge home requires much interaction with the interdisciplinary team.

As of January 2017, the turnaround to a profitable operation continues with excellent progress. RWSH is halfway through their comprehensive $26M renovation plan and opened 16 newly renovated private LTACH beds on January 26, 2017.

Other members of the team include the following professionals, which work closely to coordinate the patient’s specific treatment:

- Physical Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Psychologist
- Respiratory Therapist
- Registered Dietician
- RN Case Manager/Discharge Planner
- Pharmacist
- Registered Nurses

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