



NEWS RELEASE

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Madonna helping veterans and active duty military with traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder rehabilitation

Lincoln, NE – According to a recent article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Jan. 31, 2008) head and neck injuries, including severe brain trauma, have been reported in one quarter of service members who have been evacuated from Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of these service men and women have difficulty getting effectively diagnosed and treated for traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – two diagnoses that frequently occur together in military personnel wounded from blast injuries.

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln, Neb. has been working closely with Sen. Ben Nelson and the Veterans Administration (VA) at the national level, as well as communicating with regional VA departments and the Department of Defense, to develop partnerships so military service men and women can access the comprehensive rehabilitation care that brain injury requires.

Madonna has been treating wounded warriors referred by the Department of Defense from military bases around the country for more than a year. A recent contract with the Veterans Administration will increase these numbers dramatically. Over 30 referrals have been made to Madonna by the VA in the last month.

“Thanks to the advancements in protective armor and excellent emergency care at the medical bases, many more soldiers are surviving what would have been mortal injuries in the past,” said Marsha Lommel, President and CEO of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. “Unfortunately, the survival rate includes a higher incidence of traumatic brain injuries and other injuries requiring comprehensive rehabilitation. At Madonna, we are very pleased to help our military service men and women, who have given so much to our country, get back to their families, activities and work.”

“Brain injury is a complex problem that can include a range of deficits in vision, balance, speech, memory, cognition, and physical mobility, as well as changes in emotional functioning,” said Dr. Terryberry-Spohr. “It requires a multidisciplinary approach to rehabilitation so that each person can achieve the best possible outcome.”

Mild brain injuries are often not initially recognized or treated because the symptoms are difficult to observe and diagnose, which has been a problem for many injured military personnel.

“The percussion from an explosion can lead to head injury without any overt signs of trauma,” according to Dr. Eric Hartman, medical director of Madonna’s brain injury program. “Often the injured person will just notice the issues most significant to them such as headaches, fatigue and poor concentration. These issues are often the consequence of other primary issues, such as vision and balance problems which can be very amendable to therapies.”



Specialist Jeromy Dillman goes over his daily schedule with Gail Finsand, Madonna speech language pathologist.

Jeromy Dillman, a Specialist with the U.S. Army National Guard, was pleased to get care at Madonna. “I’ve been very fortunate to have concerned politicians and military personnel supporting my cause. I’ve seen soldiers with TBIs who didn’t get treatment for up to a year post-injury, which compromises your recovery,” Dillman said.

Dillman is now working part-time with his military unit in Lincoln and his children Hope, 11, and Nathaniel, 8, are happy to have their father spending more time with them. Dillman frequently shares his positive experience at Madonna with other injured soldiers. “At every opportunity, I try to get the word out about the wonderful program here at Madonna,” he said.

A talented team of professionals who have completed special competency training in the treatment of persons with brain injury lead Madonna’s brain injury program. The team, which is made up of neuropsychologists, physical, occupational, speech, recreational, and respiratory therapists, as well as a social worker, rehabilitation nurse and case manager, work together with the patient and family to meet the complex physical, cognitive, social and emotional needs of persons with brain injury.

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital served patients from 30 states last year and is regionally known for its Mild Traumatic Brain Injury services — a comprehensive two-day assessment and treatment focusing on medical, physical, cognitive and emotional aspects of mild traumatic brain injury.

Madonna’s Institute for Rehabilitation Science and Engineering provides leadership in assuring that the brain injury programs integrate state-of-the-art technology, such as the body weight support treadmill, brain mapping, Bioness functional electrical stimulation, environmental control units, and augmentative alternative communication devices, into the treatment program throughout the continuum of care.

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[This year, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital celebrates 50 years of providing hope and healing to thousands of people whose lives had been interrupted by traumatic events or illness.](#) Madonna’s approach to rehabilitation is much more than just therapy, it’s rebuilding lives and families; and putting hopes and dreams back together. Through highly specialized programs and services, Madonna offers individualized rehabilitation treatment to help every patient heal in mind, body and spirit – and ultimately live life to the fullest. Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital is located at 5401 South Street in Lincoln, Nebraska, 68506; 402-489-7102; www.Madonna.org.