

# October is National Physical Therapy Month



National Physical Therapy Month was started by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) to raise awareness of the many ways physical therapists can help improve quality of life by restoring and improving a person's ability to rehabilitate and get fit through the numerous forms of therapies available, including physical, aquatic and recreational.

"If you are one of many people who experience low back pain, for example, a physical therapist can help," says Paul A. Rockar, Jr., president, APTA. "If you have had a running injury or want to maintain your ability to run as you age, a physical therapist can help. If you are experiencing Bell's palsy, diabetes, frozen shoulder or pelvic pain, to name but a few conditions, a physical therapist can help."

Rockar noted that beginning Oct. 1 and continuing through Nov. 19, APTA will host its "50 Days 50 Ways" challenge. "During this challenge we will be providing 50 days worth of tips to boomers on how to prevent injury and get and/or stay fit and mobile with the help of a physical therapist. Check them out on Facebook and Twitter!" he says.

According to the 2011 "AARP Bulletin Survey on Exercise," approximately seven in 10 adults age 45 and older (71 percent) are physically active.

"If you are a baby boomer, physical therapists can help you stay physically active, including helping you deal with common injuries associated with aging, such as tendinitis and meniscus tears, as well as the effects of arthritis," Rockar explains. "In many cases, a physical therapist can work with you to manage or eliminate pain without medication and its side effects. Physical therapy may even be an alternative to surgery in many cases. A physical therapist will examine you and develop a plan of care using treatment techniques to promote your ability to move, reduce pain, restore function and prevent disability."

Physical therapists are required to complete a graduate degree – either a master's or clinical doctorate – from an accredited education program and pass a state-administered national exam before practicing. By 2015, all physical therapists will graduate with a doctor of physical therapy (DPT) degree.

"We encourage you to participate in a National Physical Therapy Month event in your community," says Rockar. "Let us show you how physical therapists can get you moving and enjoying life again."

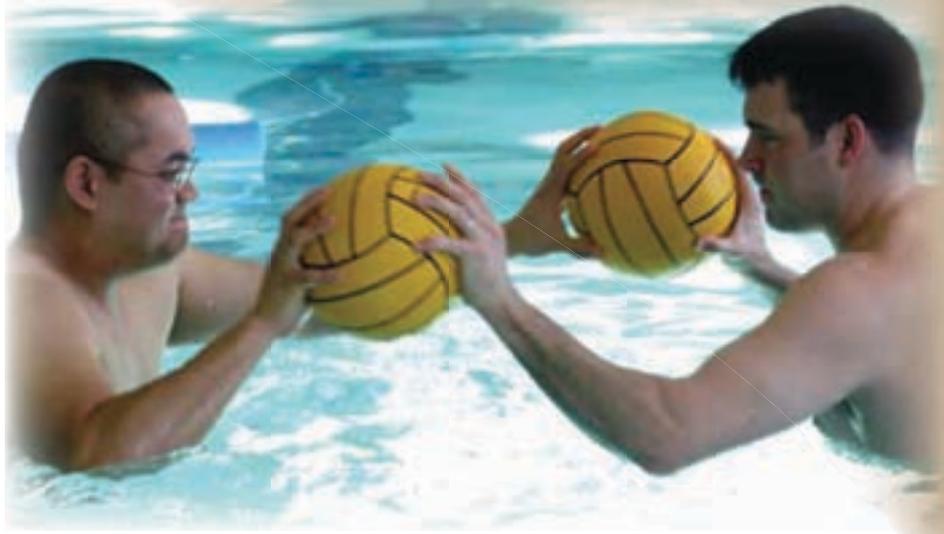
In addition to the APTA organized events throughout October, there are several conferences this month to help therapy professionals enrich their careers, including the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) Annual Conference and Tradeshow in Phoenix, Ariz., Oct. 12-15, at the Pointe

Hilton Squaw Peak Resort, and the World Aquatic Health Conference, Oct. 10-12, at the Norfolk Marriott Waterside Hotel in Norfolk, Va.

## AQUATIC HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 9th annual World Aquatic Health Conference, organized and run by the National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF), is founded on the NSPF mission to promote "Healthier Lives through Aquatic Education and Research." In 2011, the conference had a record number of registrations with more than 400 attendees from 42 states and six countries, including the U.S., Austria, Australia, Canada, Israel, the Netherlands and the U.K.

Organizers have announced several new additions this year, including new pre-conference educational events, to an already jam-packed schedule, including two keynote presentations, 45 seminars encompassing five critical topic areas, lunch roundtables, a scientific poster session and an all-new



welcome reception.

For the third year, the NSPF is partnering with the Aquatics Section of the APTA for their Aquatic Summit. The World Aquatic Health Conference also welcomes back USA Swimming and the Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA) for pre- and post-conference events.

All conference registrants are invited at no extra charge

## VA Opens New Medical Center in Las Vegas

In response to the growing healthcare needs of veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) opened a new Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Las Vegas on Aug. 6.

"This is, importantly, a promise kept with the 164,000 veterans who live in Clark, Nye, and Lincoln counties, and all 234,000 veterans who call Nevada home, as well as veterans from surrounding states who will find here the care and compassion they seek," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki, who provided keynote remarks at the dedication ceremony. "As President Obama recently told the Veterans of Foreign Wars: 'We keep our promises.'"

The brand-new \$600 million facility houses 90 inpatient beds, a 120-bed community living center (skilled nursing home-care facility) and an ambulatory care center. The 90 inpatient beds include a state-of-the-art 22-bed mental health unit, 48 medical/surgical beds and 20 intensive-care unit beds.

"The Las Vegas VAMC underscores VA's commitment to provide the best care anywhere to America's veterans, particularly in the critical area of mental health," said Dr. Robert Petzel, VA's undersecretary for Health. "The opening of this world-class facility is another milestone, and ensures VA provides the care and services our veterans have earned through their service."

The outpatient mental health clinic will provide specialized treatment programs for general mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, gambling addiction and other unique services such as transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) for the treatment of traumatic brain injury, PTSD and other conditions.

Beyond the mental health services, the new VAMC houses 23 dental exam chairs; 13 surgical, 14 radiology and six audiometric sound suites, as well as a 268-seat food court. A phased opening is planned for August through December 2012.

The Las Vegas VAMC also features a telehealth unit, with bidirectional just-in-time communication capability with its outlying clinics.



(from left): Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, VA Hospital Director John Bright and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki respond to questions from reporters following a dedication ceremony for the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System Las Vegas Medical Center Aug. 6.

This allows doctors to deliver specialized mental health and other services to these clinics. The VAMC and its outlying clinics are also equipped with "smart boards" to enhance continuing education for staff and patients.

VA operates the nation's largest integrated healthcare system. With a healthcare budget of more than \$50 billion, VA expects to provide care to 6.1 million patients during 920,000 hospitalizations and nearly 80 million outpatient visits this year. VA's healthcare network includes 152 major medical centers and more than 800 community-based outpatient clinics.

The new facility meets the latest environmental standards, with overhead solar panels on portions of the parking areas to provide additional energy to the campus.

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# Physical/Aquatic Therapy

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to cruise on the Elizabeth River from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., on Wednesday, Oct. 10. The Spirit of Norfolk offers an introduction to the city, as attendees mix, mingle and dine on a complete buffet dinner.

In addition to recording all conference seminars for viewing after the conference, this year a live streaming of the Recreational Water Illness (RWI) Track is planned for Thursday, Oct. 11. The track includes five seminars focusing on the Model Aquatic Health Code. For people who are unable to attend the conference, access is available for \$99.

In addition, the NSPF will officially launch the Step Into Swim Campaign at this event, where organizations and individuals who have committed to donate funds to the 10-year initiative will gather with representatives of leading “learn-to-swim” organizations.

“These featured organizations will make presentations describing how they will meet the demand to teach one million more swimmers over the next decade,” according to NSPF. “Congress presenters will show invitees how, together with their help, we can create industry growth AND reduce drowning, chronic illness and healthcare inflation.”

For further information on how to receive an invitation to attend the inaugural Step Into Swim Congress, visit [www.StepIntoSwim.org](http://www.StepIntoSwim.org) or call 1-719-540-9119.

For the ninth consecutive year, the World Aquatic Health Conference will host global recreational water leaders who will reflect upon the latest “WaterWisdom” and project a wise path forward. Attendees will gather to learn from the latest research and practical science.

“The conference attracts over 400 of the most influential academic, industry and government experts who are committed to making our world healthier through aquatics. In this intimate environment, leaders come together to understand emerging issues, exchange ideas and formulate future plans,” according to the association.

The conference promises a wealth of wisdom, diversity of thinking and a breadth of knowledge with 27 new speakers, all with an emphasis on useful application. Several leadership meetings will also be held during the week.

NSPF is a non-profit organization founded in 1965, giving back more than \$4 million of all revenue since 2003 to fund grants to prevent illness, injury and drowning, and to demonstrate the benefits of aquatic activity. The foundation works toward its mission to enhance healthy living by increasing aquatic activity through education and research with its growing collection of educational products and training. Visit [www.nspf.org](http://www.nspf.org) for more information on the conference.

## RECREATION THERAPY CONFERENCE

October will also be a busy month for recreation thera-

pists, who will head to the ATRA Annual Conference for educational sessions, certification and training opportunities, plus an opportunity to see the latest products and services from exhibitors.

The 2012 ATRA Annual Conference is participating in the NCTRC Pre-Approval Program. Attendees have the potential to earn 2 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from full-package registration and attending one session for each slot throughout the conference or up to 2.7 CEUs, which include 0.7 CEUs from a full-day pre-conference intensive. Pre-conferences require an additional registration and payment, with the exception of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Institute, which is only available to VA employees.

In addition to the VA Institute, pre-conference sessions include what ATRA calls “half-day intensives” and “full-day intensives,” which allow attendees to immerse themselves in a day of training with their peers. Pre-conference sessions highlights include National Forum for Recreational Therapy State Licensure, Introduction to Aquatic Therapy, Reiki Level I: A Healing Art and Yoga Therapy: Achieving Greater Awareness and Understanding for Healing Our Clients and Ourselves.

Educational sessions are also available throughout the conference, including many that are specific to military attendees. In addition to “Paving the Road to the Paralympics - The Paralympic Experience” – a three-part session that looks at supporting Paralympic athletes – military sessions of interest include “ATRA Treatment Network Sessions: Military/Veteran Treatment Network Update” on Oct. 13, and “The Wounded Warrior Project: Therapeutic Recreation for Injured Service Members” and “Treating PTSD Utilizing Animal-Assisted Therapy and Exposure Therapy” on Oct. 14.

The ATRA Treatment Sessions are intended to provide updates on policies and information for members on work plans, missions and the history of the network. A roundtable discussion will also center on the prevention of suicide among the active-duty and veteran population. Participants will understand the work plan for the network; understand the mission of the network; learn about what has been accomplished in the network for the year; be able to recall suicidal identifiers for veterans; be able to identify no less than five leading sources for suicide prevention for veterans; and be able to identify a minimum of three roles the recreational therapist can play in the prevention of suicide among current and former military.

The exhibitor social is scheduled for Oct. 12, from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., allowing attendees to network with vendors and colleagues while browsing the selection of products and services designed to benefit recreational therapists.

—GRF