

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### About the NICoE

- 1. What does the NICoE stand for?**

The NICoE [*N-EYE-co*] stands for the National Intrepid Center of Excellence.
- 2. What is the NICoE?**

The National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) is a DoD institute dedicated to providing cutting-edge evaluation, treatment planning, research and education for service members and their families dealing with the complex interactions of mild traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions.
- 3. Where is the NICoE located?**

The 72,000 square-foot facility is located in Bethesda, Md, on the campus of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. The NICoE's location offers convenient access to accommodations provided for service members and their families at a Fisher House dedicated specifically to NICoE patients. In addition, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the National Institutes of Health and Washington, DC's local public transportation system, the Metro, are also in close proximity.
- 4. What is the NICoE mission?**

The mission of the NICoE is to be a leader in advancing TBI and PH treatment, research and education.
- 5. What is the NICoE vision?**

Our vision is to be an instrument of hope, healing, discovery and learning.
- 6. Is the NICoE part of the Department of Defense?**

Yes, like all military treatment facilities, the NICoE operates under the purview of Department of Defense.
- 7. Who does the NICoE serve?**

The NICoE serves active duty service members with mild traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions.



8. **How is the NICoE program different from other PH/TBI programs offered by MTFs?**  
The NICoE utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to care, featuring a comprehensive team of medical professionals offering intensive diagnosis and treatment planning. Because of our unique clinical care model, providers are able to focus on both service members and their families. The NICoE is also home to the latest medical technology, allowing immediate access to technology required to diagnose and assess TBI and PH conditions. Serving as the hub of a public-private network of military and civilian local, regional, state, federal and global resources, the NICoE develops treatment plans, clinician and service member education programs, long-term follow-up and continuity management in one central location.
9. **Who funded the building and equipment for the NICoE?**  
A gift from the American people by way of the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, the NICoE is a tribute to America's military heroes and a place to heal the invisible wounds of war.
10. **What is the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund?**  
The Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund was established in 2000 to provide financial support for the dependents of United States service members who perished while on active duty. This continued an effort begun in 1982 by Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher, founders of the Intrepid Museum Foundation and the Fisher House Foundation.

### **Treatment at the NICoE**

11. **What services does the NICoE offer?**  
The NICoE's primary patient population is comprised of active duty service members with TBI and PH conditions who are not responding to current therapy. After being referred by their provider, patients come to the NICoE with their families for four weeks, during which time they stay in a NICoE-dedicated Fisher House on the Bethesda campus. Upon their departure, service members return to their referring military treatment facility and duty station with a personalized treatment plan and the skills to take control of their healing.  
The NICoE is also a hub of education for TBI and PH conditions. Education is provided for service members, family members, providers and researchers at the NICoE and throughout the world by way of shared research and treatment protocols, onsite conferences and video and teleconference meetings and events.
12. **How does a service member get selected for evaluation at the NICoE?**  
Service members are typically referred to the NICoE program by their primary care manager(s). A medical intake referral team will review each referral and confer with providers as necessary to determine the service member's suitability for the NICoE program.
13. **Can a service member self-refer?**  
Service members interested in receiving care at the NICoE are encouraged to contact their primary care manager to initiate the referral process.
14. **What is the first step to referring a service member?**  
The health care provider should send an email to: [nicoe@med.navy.mil](mailto:nicoe@med.navy.mil) and request a copy of the referral form. Upon submission of the completed form, the NICoE's referral team will review the referral request for suitability.
15. **How long is a typical stay at the NICoE?**  
Patients undergo evaluation and diagnosis for a four-week period at the NICoE.

16. **Can the service member select the dates they will be at the NICoE?**  
Selecting the dates service members and their families will be at the NICoE requires coordinating the schedules of the NICoE's clinicians, the service member and the service member's command.
17. **Are service members required to participate in a research study while they are at the NICoE?**  
The NICoE, in addition to its clinical care component, is a research institute dedicated to learning more about the complex interactions of TBI and PH conditions. As such, service members receiving care at the NICoE are invited to participate in current and ongoing research protocols throughout their stay. Many service members are interested in helping advance the science and improve the treatment options available to future generations. Participation is never mandatory. Occasionally, service members receiving care at WRNMMC also participate in research protocols at the NICoE, even if not involved in the outpatient program.
18. **What happens if follow-up treatment recommendations require resources or health care providers that are not available in the service member's home area or are located more than 100 miles from the service member's home?**  
The NICoE clinical team makes their best effort to address specific needs and access to care issues when building each service member's treatment plan. Each plan is created in collaboration with the service member's primary care providers, who are aware of local treatment options.
19. **Does the NICoE admit service members from OCONUS (Alaska, Hawaii, Germany, Japan, etc.)?**  
Yes. The NICoE receives referrals from military treatment facilities all over the world.
20. **Do service members and their families have an on-site patient advocate who they can contact with specific questions about their care, either before arriving or after departing?**  
Members of the Concierge Services Team (Continuity Managers and Family Advocates) are the primary advocates for service members and their families. Beyond this, all typical lines of redress available to active duty service members are in place.

### **Additional Information and Resources**

21. **What is the NICoE's operating schedule?**  
The NICoE is an outpatient facility that sees patients Monday-Friday, from 0700-1700. As a federal facility, it follows all posted guidelines for holidays.
22. **Who can organizations contact regarding partnership opportunities?**  
Send an email to the NICoE Strategic Communications and Outreach team at: [nicoe@med.navy.mil](mailto:nicoe@med.navy.mil).
23. **Who can the media contact for additional information?**  
Send an email to the NICoE Public Affairs Officer at: [nicoepao@med.navy.mil](mailto:nicoepao@med.navy.mil).
24. **Where can I find additional information on PH/TBI?**  
Contact the DCoE Outreach Center toll free at 866-966-1020 or by emailing: [resources@dcoeoutreach.org](mailto:resources@dcoeoutreach.org).