

NIDRR also has supported a center on medical rehabilitation services that has looked at factors such as supply and demand for rehabilitation facilities and practitioners, financing, and evaluation of the outcomes of rehabilitation medicine. This center has also addressed the changing context for the delivery of medical rehabilitation and access to medical rehabilitation by various population groups. Both of these centers have made contributions to the maturing of the field of medical rehabilitation and its ability to evaluate and document its interventions and outcomes.

However, it is now clear that the field needs a larger and more integrated effort to refine measures of functional ability, changes in ability over the lifespan or in response to medical rehabilitation interventions, and to apply the measurement system in the changing environment in which medical rehabilitation is delivered. NIDRR therefore is proposing a large-scale effort to involve significant leaders in the classification and measurement of function, the evaluation of rehabilitation interventions, and the broader application of knowledge to the organization and management of medical rehabilitation services in today's environment.

Priority: The Secretary will establish an RRTC for the purpose of examining the impact of changes in the field of rehabilitation medicine and developing improved measures for assessing individual function and the impact of medical rehabilitation services. The RRTC shall:

(1) Identify and evaluate validated functional outcome measures that can be used or modified for assessing the impact of medical rehabilitation services in a wide range of rehabilitation settings, with particular emphasis on measures that can be adapted for use in outpatient and community-based settings, including those that use telemedicine and multimedia technology;

(2) Develop or improve measures to assess the impact of the social and physical environment in achieving quality rehabilitation outcomes, including the use of assistive technology in attaining functional outcomes; (3) Identify or develop uniform database elements and standards based on validated individual measures at the person level for determining the cost-effectiveness and functional impact of specific rehabilitation interventions used by medical rehabilitation and allied-health disciplines across multiple settings and disability populations;

(4) Identify obstacles to the use of validated functional outcomes measures in a wide range of settings in which medical rehabilitation services are provided, and in decisions to provide and assess the effectiveness of medical rehabilitation treatments, and develop and evaluate strategies to overcome those obstacles;

(5) Identify strategies for determining the long-term results of medical rehabilitation care, including use of assistive technology;

(6) Analyze how models for the organization of medical rehabilitation services affect outcomes and costs, and how the demographic, economic, and presenting conditions of consumers affect their utilization of rehabilitation services and the outcomes that are achieved;

(7) Analyze the impact of new configurations of medical rehabilitation service delivery and financing, such as capitated managed care and risk adjustment strategies, on access to quality medical rehabilitation services; and

(8) Develop an information dissemination and training program to enable consumers, providers, researchers, policy makers, and relevant others in health and rehabilitation settings to assess the quality of medical rehabilitation services.

In carrying out the purposes of the priority, the RRTC shall:

- Coordinate with rehabilitation medicine research and demonstration activities sponsored by NIDRR, including the RRTC on Health Care for Individuals with Disabilities—Issues in Managed Health Care, the National Center on Medical Rehabilitation Research, Veterans Administration, and the Health Care Financing Administration; and

- Support two national conferences as follows: (1) a conference on the use of functional outcome measures to improve medical rehabilitation practices and interventions, and (2) a conference on improving validity and reliability in the measurement of rehabilitation outcomes.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR Parts 350 and 352.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 760–762. (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers: 84.133B, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center Program)

Dated: July 9, 1997.

Judith E. Heumann,
Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No.: 84.133B]

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research; Notice Inviting Applications Under the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 1997

Purpose of Program: RRTCs conduct coordinated and advanced programs of research on disability and rehabilitation that will produce new knowledge that will improve rehabilitation methods and service delivery systems, alleviate or stabilize disabling conditions, and promote maximum social and economic independence for individuals with disabilities. RRTCs provide training to service providers at the pre-service, in-service training, undergraduate, and graduate levels, to improve the quality and effectiveness of rehabilitation services. They also provide advanced research training to individuals with disabilities and those from minority backgrounds, engaged in research on disability and rehabilitation. RRTCs serve as national and regional technical assistance resources, and provide training for service providers, individuals with disabilities and families and representatives, and rehabilitation researchers.

The final priority for this award, entitled "Medical Rehabilitation Services and Outcomes," is published in this issue of the **Federal Register**. Potential applicants should consult the statement of the final priority published in this issue to ascertain the substantive requirements for their application.

This program supports the National Education Goal that calls for all Americans to possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education and public or private agencies and organizations collaborating with institutions of higher education, including Indian tribes and tribal organizations, are eligible to apply for awards under this program.

Applications Available: July 15, 1997.

Application Deadline: August 28, 1997.

Maximum Award Amount Per Year: \$950,000.

Notes: The Secretary will reject without consideration or evaluation any application that proposes a project funding level that exceeds the stated maximum award amount per year (See 34 CFR 75.104(b)). The

maximum award amount per year includes direct and indirect costs.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The estimates of funding levels and awards in this notice do not bind the Department of Education to a specific level of funding or number of grants.

Project Period: 60 months.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86; (b) the regulations for this program in 34 CFR Parts 350 and 352; and (c) the notice of final priority published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

For Applications Contact: The Grants and Contracts Service Team, Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW., Switzer Building, Room 3317, Washington, DC 20202, or call (202) 205-8207.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number at (202) 205-9860. The preferred method for requesting information is to FAX your request to (202) 205-8717.

Information about the Department's funding opportunities, including copies of application notices for discretionary grant competitions, can be viewed on the Department's electronic bulletin

board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260-9950; on the Internet Gopher Server (at gopher://gcs.ed.gov); or on the World Wide Web (at <http://gcs.ed.gov>).

However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 760-762.

Dated: July 9, 1997.

Judith E. Heumann,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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