



# California Children Services (CCS) Medical Therapy Unit (MTU) Newsletter



San Bernardino  
County  
Department Of  
Public Health  
CCS

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## FALL ISSUE 2013



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### Medical Therapy Units are Closed :

October 14th — Columbus Day  
November 11th — Veteran's Day  
November 13th — R & I Meeting  
November 28th and 29th—  
Thanksgiving Holidays  
December 24th, 25th and December 31 and  
January 1, 2014 —  
Winter Holidays



Please, fill out the Patient/Family  
Comment Cards and place them in  
the blue boxes that are located in  
the waiting areas of all our MTU's.  
We really do want your feedback  
so that we can be responsive to  
your needs.

Thank you!  
Your MTU Staff

### EDITOR:

Laura McLaughlin, MSW

### Many Thanks To:

Dr. Borhaan Ahmad,  
Yessica Veldanez,  
Judy Vigil-Montano and  
Manal Kassab

Please note:

If you would like an  
electronic copy of this  
publication please email me:

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## California Children Services Medical Therapy Units

**Manal Kassab, MA, OTR, Supervising Therapist**

Carmack MTU, (909) 880-6611, Sherylle Martin, OTR, Unit Supervisor

Colton MTU, (909) 433-4752, Scott Medlin, PT, Unit Supervisor

Fontana MTU, (909) 357-5900, Nivin Ghattas, OTR, Unit Supervisor

Montclair/Etiwanda MTU, (909) 445-1665, Angie Atkins, OTR, Unit Supervisor

Ontario MTU, (909) 459-2861, Michelle Morris, PT, Unit Supervisor

Redlands MTU, (909) 307-2441, Elaine Bauman, OTR, Unit Supervisor

Siegrist/Barstow MTU, (760) 244-7999, Marleah Moore, PT, Unit Supervisor



## Both Sides of the Coin: My Journey to Becoming a Physical Therapist

By Yessica V. Veldanez,  
Student Physical Therapy Aid at Siegrist MTU

"Have you ever felt like someone hit you on the back of your head with a baseball bat?" That's exactly what I felt when I had a brain tumor. When I was 12 years old I was diagnosed with a benign brain tumor. I had a doctor's appointment with a neurosurgeon at 8:00 am. That's when my mom realized something was wrong; and just seeing the look on her face made my stomach turn. At the appointment, the neurosurgeon told my mom that he needed to remove the brain tumor immediately because it was growing too fast and it was causing damage to different structures in the brain.

I was hospitalized that Monday at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital and went in for surgery at 9:00 pm. I was in surgery for 11 hours. Two weeks later, I had surgery again because cerebral spinal fluid was leaking through my eyes and nostrils. After this second surgery my rehabilitation began. I never went to a CCS center for therapy but I do remember that CCS paid for hospital expenses that my insurance would not pay for. I don't necessarily remember the first time I had physical therapy, but I do remember my therapist had me do bed exercises. The thing I remembered the most about physical therapy was disliking it. My mother jokingly tells me that just like I used to say, "I don't like physical therapy, why can't they just leave", my future patients will say the same thing about me. Later I started liking physical therapy when I was able to do more, especially when I started walking again; that was the highlight of my rehabilitation. During this time, I also had occupational therapy. My favorite occupational therapy session was when I made pumpkin pie. After I experienced this myself I really liked the thought of helping other children like myself, and this is what inspired me to follow this profession.



After I was discharged from the hospital, I had to learn how to accommodate with my now known disability. Being completely blind in the left eye and having partial vision in the right eye took some time getting used to and accepting my disability. Middle school and high school were the hardest years of my life because I was always thinking, "why can't I just be like everybody else?" But when I got to college, I decided I was going to do something for myself. Before going to college, I never thought I would go to college because nobody in my entire family or friends from high school went to college. The Braille Institute recommended me to the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). My counselor from DOR encouraged me to go to college, especially because they going to pay for it all. I also applied for Pell Grants and Cal Grants, which helped me pay for rent while living on campus. I have attended Chaffey College; Victor Valley College and graduated with an A.S. in Math/Science and A.A. in Liberal Arts; Cal State University San Bernardino and graduated with a B.S. Kinesiology: Pre-Physical Therapy; Loma Linda University and graduated with A.S. Physical Therapist Assistant; and I am currently applying to the Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

I would advise young adults with disabilities to not be afraid of experiencing new things. Yes, it's a scary world out there, but don't let your disability define who you are as a person. You can do anything you want, the only difference is that we have to work a little harder, but in the end it's worth it. Make new friends; get involved in clubs and support groups, but most of all get an education. There are many resources for students with disabilities---take advantage of them. I would also advise parents to let your children experiment and be independent. As a parent it's hard seeing your children be independent because they have always needed your help and you don't want your children to fail, but by overprotecting them you are inhibiting them from reaching their fullest potential.

My journey has not been easy, but I have learned so much from myself and I don't allow my disability to impede who I am, I just try to accommodate for it. Being a physical therapist patient has allowed me to see both sides of the coin. I think this experience will help me in treating my future patients because I know it's not always easy and I will be able to encourage them to reach their goals.



# LOOKING AHEAD: TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD

By Manal Kassab, MA, OTR and Supervising Therapist CCS

When children are young they need physical assistance and emotional support to complete even the simplest tasks. In most circumstances parents provide that assistance and support without question looking forward to the time when their child achieves independence and becomes a self-sufficient adult. Ideally, as the child grows and matures parents gradually reduce the amount of assistance and support being provided to their child so that the child learns to be more independent.

Parents of children with special needs are excellent at providing assistance and support for their children. They help them get dressed, eat, walk, bathe, exercise, complete homework, communicate, etc.... This continues for many years as the child grows and matures depending on the physical and/or cognitive limitations that might be a part of the child's disability. Because of their child's long term needs for this type of support, parents have a difficult time seeing the possibilities of their child becoming more independent with certain tasks even as they become teenagers or young adults. This is where the OTs and PTs in the Medical Therapy program can provide a very important and necessary service to the families of these young adults. The areas that we can provide assistance include advanced skills of daily living such as meal preparation, laundry management, community access and safety, peer networking, personal hygiene and grooming, and budgeting. In some of the therapy units, these concepts are addressed in group settings. The advantage of the group setting is that it gives the teenagers a chance to share their experiences, (or lack of) and problem solve some of their difficulties and frustrations. They may have experienced some bullying at school or other situations that they were frustrated with and this gives them an opportunity to talk about these things with young people their age. Parents are encouraged to talk to their therapists to see if and when their child would be considered ready for this type of group or intervention. As therapists

we are here to do what we can to assist your child in maximizing his/her potential for independence and we need your assistance in identifying areas that are relevant and important to your child.



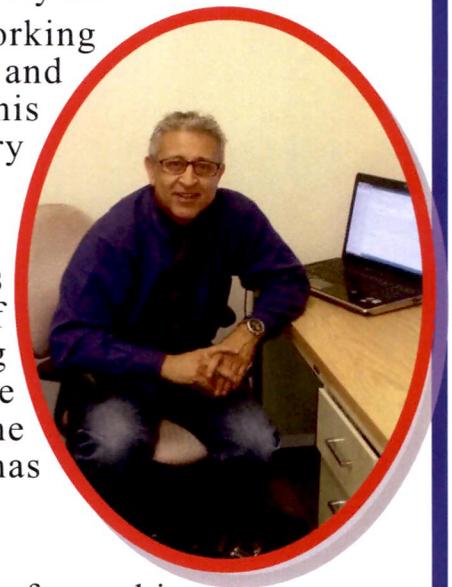


## Interview with Dr. Borhaan Ahmad by Laura McLaughlin, MSW

Dr. Ahmad has been working with CCS as a Pediatric Team Physician at the Ontario and Yucca Mesa Medical Therapy Units (MTU) for eight years. He attended medical school in his home country of Afghanistan. When the Russian army invaded his country, he and a few members of his family fled his native country and arrived to the neighboring country of Pakistan as a war refugee. He stayed in Pakistan for six months. He worked as a volunteer at one of the refugee clinics during that time. He then came to the U.S. as an immigrant and joined his family in Arizona. He eventually moved to Ohio where he completed his Residency in Pediatrics. After completion of Residency he moved to California. He has been working as a Pediatric Attending at Loma Linda University Medical Center for the past 17 years.

When asked what made him want to become a doctor he said his family was in politics in Afghanistan but with all of the strife in his country he turned to medicine. He said also that he always loved working with kids, he comes from a large family of four brothers and five sisters and medicine is a highly esteemed career in his home country. He says that being a doctor is very rewarding working with the children and their families.

His hobbies are traveling, playing tennis, and enjoying his classic car and also going to classic car shows. The staff at Yucca Mesa MTU has seen him drive into the parking lot in one of his favorite cars---a bright yellow, vintage Volkswagen "Thing"! He also volunteers his time to the Afghan Medical Association of America (AMAA) and has been a member there for the past 20 years.



Dr. Ahmad also shares that he has learned much from his experiences over the years with CCS. The coordination of care, the social issues that come up and the family involvement are some of the benefits of his time spent with the team of professionals at the MTU's. He has enjoyed getting to really know our families and appreciates what they do every day to care for their children. He also says he enjoys the team approach because we look at the "whole health" of the child, he learns from all the team members and he likes the challenges it brings. He also likes socializing with friends, family members and colleagues. He enjoys listening to Indian classical music, as well as Latin music.

Dr. Ahmad wanted to tell all of the parents and caregivers he has had the privilege to meet, that he admires their dedication and commitment to providing love and care for their children. He said, "Never lose hope, enjoy your kids, and despite their disability, everyone can share their love".

# Some of our families may now qualify for their own health care since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act

So.....

You can either go to your local Transitional Assistance Department (TAD) office or call the Customer Service Center at San Bernardino County TAD @ 1-877-410-8829

OR

You may go on the Internet and visit the Covered California website listed below:



Visit Covered California's consumer-friendly homepage  
**www.CoveredCA.com**  
 or call us, toll-free:  
**800-300-1506**

## For Additional Information or Resources



2-1-1 Is a toll-free phone number that provides information and referrals for health and social services, dialing 2-1-1 is the quickest way to access non-emergency resources for your family, your neighbors and your employees.

**Marque 2-1-1**  
 or 1-888-435-7565  
 visit [www.211sb.com](http://www.211sb.com)

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