

## What is Physiatry?

Trinity Health Of New England Medical Group's Chicopee office has a department called Physiatry. Physiatrists specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Physiatrists treat a wide variety of medical conditions that affect the brain, spinal cord, nerves, joints, ligaments, muscles and tendons. Conditions commonly addressed include acute and chronic back pain, osteoarthritis, tendonitis, and carpal tunnel syndrome. Pain resulting from injury, illness or disabling conditions such as cerebral palsy or stroke are also addressed.

Physiatrists work closely with primary care physicians, rheumatologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists and chiropractors to improve function, strength, and a return to an active lifestyle.

Sometimes, your doctor may be unsure why your pain is out of control. He or she may send you to a physiatrist to develop a safe, non-addicting pain management program to improve your quality of life.

Trinity Health Of New England's Physiatry department treats people aged 18 and above. Physiatrists do not perform surgery, apply casts, or treat broken bones.

Diagnostic imaging studies may be ordered to aid in the diagnosis of your condition. You may also be a candidate for electromyography (EMG) or nerve conduction studies to aid in diagnosis and treatment of nerve conditions such as a pinched nerve in your neck or back, carpal tunnel syndrome, or nerve injury from chronic diabetes or chronic alcohol use. By applying electrodes to the body part being tested, the physiatrist can measure the nerve response to stimulation, letting the provider know if your nerves are healthy and, if there's a problem, if the condition is treatable.

One of the treatment options unique to Physiatry for neck or back pain with associated nerve pain is an epidural injection. With an epidural injection, the physiatrist may ask an anesthesiologist to help relax you with medication. An x-ray machine is then used to find the right level of the spine where your pain is coming from. He or she will then inject a combination of medications into the site to decrease inflammation and help with pain. Patients who receive this treatment usually feel better within one day to two weeks. This injection can be given as many as three times a year. Physiatrists can also use x-ray to perform joint injections and to provide Botox injection for spastic conditions that arise from cerebral palsy, stroke and torticollis.

If your condition requires surgery, the physiatrist may refer you directly to an orthopedist or a neurosurgeon.

If you have a condition that you feel will benefit from a Physiatry consultation, please discuss this with your primary care physician. Trinity Health Of New England Medical Group has two exceptional physiatrists who work out of our Chicopee office, Dr. Rose Bernal-Larioza and Dr. Paul Azimov. The department also employs two highly skilled physician assistants, Mr. Joseph Chappell PA-C and Mr. Troy Chilson PA-C. The department has a combined seventy years of experience in treating patients with high quality care and service. The physiatrists in the Trinity Health Of New England Medical Group look forward to meeting you and to treating you during your time of need.