



For Immediate Release
May 27, 2021

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Salus University Clinical Site Offers Help to COVID-19 Survivors



Speech-Language Institute (SLI) of Salus University.

Elkins Park, Pa. — May is national Better Speech & Hearing Month (BSHM) and with an estimated 10 to 30 percent of COVID-19 survivors experiencing chronic conditions, or “long-haul” symptoms including brain fog and swallowing difficulties, speech-language pathologists (SLPs) from the Speech-Language Institute (SLI) of Salus University are encouraging the public to seek care from qualified experts who can help them regain their functioning and quality of life.

“The pandemic has posed so many challenges to us all as a society, but one of the biggest concerns right now is the difficulties many people are experiencing after contracting COVID-19,” said Robert Serianni, MS, CCC-SLP, FNAP, chair and director of the University’s

SLP program. “From brain fog, to difficulty eating and drinking, to speech and language problems, these can affect return to work, the ability to take care of one’s family, and overall recovery.”

SLPs can help people with, or recovering from, COVID-19 who are having short- and longer-term difficulties in the following areas:

Cognition

Many COVID-19 “long-haulers” are reporting persistent brain fog as a debilitating symptom after their bout with the virus. This can prevent a return to work and impact their ability to tend to family responsibilities. SLPs at the University’s SLI can work with individuals to improve their memory, attention, organization and planning, problem solving, learning and social communication.

Swallowing

People diagnosed with COVID-19 may experience swallowing problems that can put them at risk for choking or aspirating, which is when food goes into the lungs instead of the stomach. This may be the result of time spent on a ventilator, or it may be another side effect of the virus. SLPs use different types of tests to determine what happens when a person swallows and how the related muscles are working—helping a patient’s medical team, including the SLP, decide on the best course of action with the patient and their family.

Communication

People diagnosed with COVID-19 are also experiencing speech and language difficulties. Some, such as those who spent a significant amount of time on a ventilator or experienced low oxygen to the brain, may have muscle weakness or reduced coordination in the muscles of the face, lips, tongue and throat—making it difficult to talk. SLPs work with patients through targeted therapy to improve their communication and understanding.

Additionally, people who have severe speech and/or language difficulties may need to find other ways to answer questions or tell people what they want, such as through gesturing with their hands, pointing to letters or pictures on a paper or board, or using a computer. These are all forms of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). SLPs help find the appropriate AAC method to meet an individual’s needs.

For more information, Philadelphia area residents can contact the University’s SLI at (215) 780-3150 or SalusUhealth.com/SLI.

About Salus University

Salus University, founded as the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1919, today is a diversified, globally recognized professional academic center of learning that offers a wide range of degree programs in the professions of Optometry, Audiology, Physician Assistant, Blindness and Low Vision Studies, Biomedicine, Occupational Therapy and Speech-Language Pathology. Salus operates four clinical facilities in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties that provide highly specialized vision, hearing and balance, speech-language pathology services and occupational therapy. The University has more than 1,200 students, and more than 14,000 alumni worldwide. For more information, please visit www.salus.edu.