

## Multiple Sclerosis Certified Specialists & Your Care

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a lifelong neurological disease which affects the central nervous system resulting in impairments and limitations which contribute to difficulties in daily functioning. These limitations can lead to disability with implications for patients, their families and caregivers. The disease course of MS is variable and unpredictable for each patient; symptoms can be progressive in nature and may have relapses with worsening over time due to the disease process depending on the type. The symptoms of MS often lead to difficulty walking, fatigue, weakness, and cognitive changes among many others with substantial effects on the body. These symptoms have influence on the day to day, social and job opportunities; as the most common range of diagnosis is in young adults, with an average age of diagnosis of 30. The symptoms are complex and require interdisciplinary team management. Diagnosis and treatment is often complicated as there is treatment but no cure for the disease.

There are 2.5 million people in the world living with MS and over 400,000 in the United States. Research has emphasized the early intervention of patients with MS including disease modifying drugs, rehabilitation, symptom management, and psychological support. The complexity of the disease, the high number affected and the ongoing need for a lifetime of care contribute the need and the necessity for a specialized interdisciplinary care team.

The [Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers](#) supports need for this complex care by offering a voluntary certification process that reflects knowledge in the specialization of MS care called [Multiple Sclerosis Certified Specialists \(MSCS\)](#). The MSCS certification provides formal recognition of the skills necessary to provide optimal care to individuals and families living with multiple sclerosis. Certification is intended to promote quality and consistent care to those living with MS.

I have been a physical therapist for 12 years successfully treating individuals with Neurological conditions including Multiple Sclerosis. I sought out applying to take the MSCS certification exam in 2014 after Good Shepherd Penn Partners partnered with Penn Medicine to provide a Center of Excellence for the care of those with

Multiple Sclerosis. The uniqueness of patients with Multiple Sclerosis requires professionals who have significant knowledge of the disease and its processes. Taking this exam offered me an extensive gain in knowledge in MS and the care of those with Multiple Sclerosis. Although not necessary to become a certified specialist, it was an invaluable process to gain further knowledge to improve my care of patients with MS in Physical Therapy and rehab care.

All licensed health professionals, with at least one year of experience caring for patients with multiple sclerosis, will be eligible to take a certification examination in multiple sclerosis. Those who successfully pass the examination will be called a Multiple Sclerosis Certified Specialist (MSCS). Rehabilitation professionals, licensed nursing professionals, social workers, psychologists, neuropsychologists, and other licensed personnel are able to apply for this examination.

Certification is supported by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to have more certified experts in the care of patients with MS due to the common complexities associated with the disease process. Penn Therapy & Fitness has multiple rehab clinicians throughout the system who provide excellence in care for those diagnosed with multiple sclerosis across our clinics specializing in treatment of Neurological conditions.

[Find an outpatient location near you to learn more about specialized therapy services focused on Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological conditions.](#)



**About the Blogger:**

Diana Duda, PT, DPT, MSCS graduated from University of the Sciences in Philadelphia in 2005 with a Masters of Science in Physical Therapy. She received her transitional Doctorate in Physical therapy in 2007 from University of the Sciences. She has been working in Neurological Rehab and Orthopedic Rehab for 12 years both inpatient and outpatient. Diana took an Outpatient position with Good Shepherd Penn Partners in 2011 at the opening of the Rittenhouse site. In 2013 Diana became a Multiple Sclerosis Certified Specialist. She works closely with the MS clinic at Penn Medicine. She is part of the multidisciplinary outpatient wheelchair clinic at Penn Therapy and Fitness at Rittenhouse. She has a strong student involvement working as an adjunct at University of the Sciences, lecturing

at Arcadia University and the Center clinical coordinator of education. In 2014 she attended the Susan Herdman competency course for Vestibular Rehab. She is experienced in the treatment of patients for vestibular diagnoses and concussion.