



University of Texas MD
Anderson Cancer Center

Intermediate Level

.15 ASHA CEUs

Protocols for Intensive Dysphagia Therapy

Available until 12/31/2026

Level: Intermediate

Course Structure:

This course is an asynchronous course, available on-demand. Participants will have the opportunity to complete course requirements via a recorded webinar.

Course Description:

This course describes two models of intensive dysphagia therapy for patients with persistent, chronic, or late dysphagia after head and neck cancer treatment – the MD Anderson Swallowing Boot Camp Algorithm and the VA Intensive Dysphagia Therapy Program. Program algorithms, patient eligibility, therapy schedules, and interdisciplinary integration insights are covered within this course.

Course Objectives:

1. Describe diagnostics and eligibility for intensive dysphagia therapy programs.
2. Describe algorithm for therapy selection based on patient profiles.
3. Describe practical considerations for maintenance therapies and integration of interdisciplinary dysphagia management.

Agenda:

- 0-5 Introduction (Hutcheson)
- 5-30 Intensive (re-active) dysphagia therapy in HNC survivors with post-treatment dysphagia (VA Intensive Dysphagia Therapy “IDT” Approach) (Rogus-Pulia)
- 30-55 Intensive (re-active) dysphagia therapy in HNC survivors with post-treatment Dysphagia (MD Anderson “Boot Camp” Approach) (Hutcheson)
- 55-75 Moderated panel discussion (Hutcheson, Rogus-Pulia, Porsche, Welden, Sullivan)
- 75-90 Moderated participant Q&A with panelists

No partial credit will be given for this course.

Completion Requirements:

In order to receive ASHA CEUs, you must complete the following—

1. Watch the webinar in full, which will be monitored through the website.
2. Complete a post-course evaluation and survey within 48 hours of watching the webinar in full.
3. The post-course assessment will include a multiple-choice test, which must be completed with 100% accuracy. The learner will have unlimited attempts.

[Link to Post-Course Evaluation](#)

Policies: Please see home page

Bios/Disclosures:

Dr. Kate Hutcheson, Ph.D.

Dr. Kate Hutcheson is a tenured Professor and Deputy Director of Clinical Research in the Department of Head and Neck Surgery with dual appointment in the Division of Radiation Oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. She serves as Section Chief and Research Director for the Section of Speech Pathology and Audiology. Dr. Hutcheson is a certified speech-language pathologist practicing in oncology for 19 years, a Board-Certified Specialist in Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders (BCS-S) and holds a Doctorate Degree in Epidemiology. She leads an internationally recognized, extramurally funded clinical research program. She has authored over 175 journal articles with funding support from the National Institutes of Health, Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute, the MD Anderson Institutional Research Grant Award program, and the CPRIT UT Health Innovation Training Program. She is an Associated Editor for the Head and Neck and Dysphagia journals. She is a passionate clinician and educator who lectures nationally and internationally on radiation associated dysphagia and head and neck cancer rehabilitation.

Disclosures: Dr. Hutcheson receives research funding from the National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute (R01CA271223, R01CA273984), Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI 1609-36195), the MD Anderson Institutional Research Grant Program, and Atos Medical. Unrestricted Educational Grant outside this Program from Atos Medical. Developer and PI of the DIGEST method. Dr. Hutcheson receives no royalties or personal fees related to this DIGEST content.

Dr. Nicole Rogus-Pulia, Ph.D.

Dr. Rogus-Pulia is an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Medicine, Surgery, Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Additionally, she is the Director of the Swallowing and Salivary Bioscience Laboratory in the Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital as well as Director of the multi-site Veteran Health Administration's (VHA) Intensive Dysphagia Treatment (IDT) program. The goal of Dr. Rogus-Pulia's research program is to systematically identify and characterize factors underlying dysphagia in older adults and patients with dementia with the goal of translating these findings into novel, evidence-based treatments for prevention of pneumonia onset. Dr. Rogus-Pulia has received grant funding from the Veterans Health Administration, the Wisconsin Head and Neck Cancer Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE), the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support this work.

Disclosures: Dr. Rogus-Pulia is employed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Williams S. Middleton VA Medical Center and receives a salary. She has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose.

Christine Porsche, MS, CCC-SLP

Christine Porsche is a Senior Speech Pathologist, Clinical Coordinator, and Certified Lymphedema Therapist at MD Anderson Cancer Center. She is a collaborator on NIH-funded clinical research protocols and has been an invited speaker at several regional and national conferences.

Disclosures: Ms. Porsche is employed by MD Anderson Cancer Center and receives a salary. She has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose.

Dr. Kathy Welden, Ph.D.

Kathy Welden is the voice and swallowing program manager of the speech pathology service at Cincinnati VA Medical Center. She is a board-certified specialist in swallowing and swallowing disorders and has 20 years of experience working with patients with dysphagia. She fulfills a primarily clinical role, but also conducts some clinical research, and she serves as the Cincinnati site manager for the national VA multi-site Intensive Dysphagia Treatment (IDT) Program. Dr. Welden is also an adjunct associate professor in the Communication Sciences and Disorders Program at the University of Cincinnati, and teaches courses in dysphagia, voice, and clinical management of the head and neck cancer patient.

Disclosures: Ms. Welden is employed by The VA Medical Center in Cincinnati and receives a salary. She has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose.

Paula Sullivan, MS, CCC-SLP

Ms. Sullivan has worked almost exclusively with individuals dealing with head and neck cancer and its treatment effects, which she describes as her passion, for approximately 30 years of her career. During this time Paula has been affiliated with numerous comprehensive cancer institutes including Moffitt Cancer Center, The University of Miami, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Currently, she is clinical speech manager with the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Gainesville, FL. Additionally, Paula has participated in various National Cancer Institute clinical swallowing trials, and published many articles, book chapters and co-authored a text on dysphagia in head and neck cancer populations. She considers herself a clinician at heart. Both the Florida Association of Speech Language Pathologists (FLASHA) and Association of Veterans Affairs Speech-Language Pathologists (AVASLP) have bestowed the honor of Clinician of the Year to Paula. FLASHA described Paula as "the clinician's clinician." In 2015, the AVASLP also awarded Paula their Clinical Career Award. Recently, the University of South Florida Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders named Paula as their initial Alumni Hall of Fame recipient. Paula is an ASHA Fellow and former coordinator of ASHA's Division 13, Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders. She has co-authored multiple national guidelines, directives, and policies relating to dysphagia for both the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the American Speech-Language, Hearing Association (ASHA). Paula is one of the initial cadre who earned specialty recognition in swallowing and swallowing disorders (BCS-S).

Disclosures: Ms. Sullivan is employed by North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System and receives a salary. She has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose.