

Allied Health Professionals Connect at the MDA Clinical & Scientific Conference

On March 8, 2026, almost 50 allied health professionals gathered in a conference room for the Allied Health Workshop at the 2026 MDA Clinical & Scientific Conference. This special meeting brought together nurses, social workers, genetic counselors, physical and occupational therapists, and other practitioners representing 38 institutions across the nation.

In addition to playing critical roles in multidisciplinary care for neuromuscular patients, allied health professionals often manage clinics, coordinate therapies, order equipment, schedule imaging studies, and more. Bringing so many allied health professionals together in one room offered a rare opportunity for them to discuss their day-to-day challenges and how they overcome them.

“What we hope providers get out of this meeting is learning what’s working for others and how others are solving problems,” said co-chair Gina Killian, DNP, APRN, a nurse practitioner and clinic coordinator at University of Florida Health. She led the session with co-chair Heather Hantak, PT, a physical therapist at the University of Florida Health.

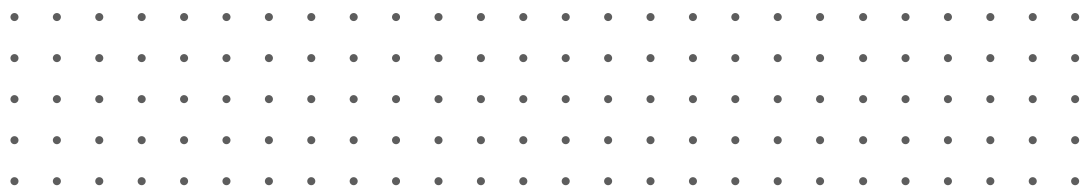


Heather Hantak, PT
Physical Therapist
University of Florida Health Shands
Rehabilitation for Children



Gina Killian, DNP
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
University of Florida Health

The half-day CE-accredited session featured presentations aimed at sharing best practices for coordinating care and managing care transitions, as well as open-ended discussions. One of the liveliest discussions centered around durable medical equipment (DME). Participants described how they handle equipment evaluations and schedule seating clinics or wheelchair demos. Some shared how they coordinate with the Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation team at their institutions. They also talked about common reasons for insurance rejections and tips for submitting effective appeals.



Brooke Smith, LMSW, Senior Director, Resource Center & Family & Clinical Support at MDA, answered questions about MDA's DME Grant Program, which helps people living with neuromuscular diseases obtain essential equipment that supports mobility, independence, and safety.

Participants left the session with practices they could take back to their own clinics, as well as resources to share with colleagues and patients. But the best takeaway, according to one participant, was feeling more connected to other allied health professionals in the neuromuscular field. The treatment landscape is changing quickly, but this group's dedication to helping patients manage mobility, health, and quality of life is not.

Resources

- Save the date for the 2027 MDA Clinical & Scientific Conference, March 21-24, 2027, in Orlando, FL
- Stay tuned for the next set of virtual sessions-- coming Fall 2026!
- Learn about the [MDA Durable Medical Equipment Grant Program](#).
- When a patient or family member is looking for answers about neuromuscular diseases, programs, or resources, direct them to the MDA Resource Center at 833-ASK-MDA1 (833-275-6321) or ResourceCenter@mdausa.org.