



Winter 2009

The latest rehabilitation news and advances from **Carolinus Rehabilitation**



TRICARE chooses Carolinus Rehabilitation

Carolinus Rehabilitation is proud to announce that it will soon be an approved, in-network rehabilitation provider for TRICARE, the managed healthcare program for active duty and retired members of uniformed services, their families and survivors. The agreement covers inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient physician services and outpatient rehabilitation. As a result of this partnership, area military personnel will have the option to obtain rehabilitative care close to home, instead of having to travel to a distant military hospital.

“North Carolina has a rich military history and is known for training the most well prepared armed services in

the world. We’re fortunate to have so many hometown heroes as our neighbors and friends,” says Robert G. Larrison, president of Carolinus Rehabilitation. “It’s our honor and privilege to provide the best rehabilitative care available to service men and women. The comprehensive nature of our rehabilitation hospitals, outpatient programs, outreach services, vocational programs and affiliation with Carolinus Medical Center provides military families with the comfort of knowing they’re in the right hands.”

A REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENCE

Carolinus Rehabilitation is known for its treatment of traumatic brain

⇒ DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Veteran’s Administration, 25 percent of combat casualties are a result of TBI and SCI. More than 90 percent of combat-related TBIs are closed head injuries, with most service members sustaining a mild TBI, or concussion, both of which would benefit from rehabilitation services.

injury (TBI) and spinal cord injury (SCI) and has been a TBI Model System—one of only 16 in the United States—for 10 years. The program allows Carolinus Rehabilitation to study long-term outcomes, behavior, mood and relationships of individuals who have brain injuries. Carolinus Rehabilitation also participates in several multi-center trials involving brain injuries and SCI to evaluate our rehabilitation interventions and outcomes.

Inpatient programs include comprehensive therapies; an emerging responsiveness program for persons emerging from a coma; wound care; family education; apartment stays; and community outings.

Our team approach to rehabilitation provides our patients with excellent care. We also offer vocational rehabilitation, aquatic therapy, access to assistive technology, adaptive childcare training for parents and a comprehensive seating and positioning clinic with pressure mapping technology. ■



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< Wheelchair tennis is just one of the many sports that Johnny Ragland enjoys. Carolinas Rehabilitation's Adaptive Sports and Adventures Program helped Johnny get back in action after an accident left him wheelchair-bound.

Back in the game

Former patient Johnny Ragland stays active with sports through ASAP

July 5, 2004, was the day that changed Johnny Ragland's life. On that day, Johnny was in a motorcycle accident in Gaston County. Found unconscious on the side of the road, Johnny fractured his C2 vertebra, broke his collarbone and two ribs and suffered a spinal cord fracture at T6.

Johnny doesn't remember anything about the accident, including being flown to Carolinas Medical Center to undergo numerous surgeries. He does, however, remember the days that led up to him choosing Carolinas Rehabilitation for his recovery. A representative from Carolinas Rehabilitation spoke with him about what to expect during his rehabilitation stay. Johnny

remembers the "whirlwind of uncertainty" while being in the hospital, but found comfort in knowing there was a plan for his treatment and recovery.

MOTIVATION FUELS RECOVERY

At Carolinas Rehabilitation, Johnny never missed a therapy session. Each morning he awoke looking



"If it weren't for [the Adaptive Sports and Adventures Program], I don't know where I would be today."

—Johnny Ragland



forward to working with the therapists. "I had the best therapists," Johnny says. They didn't treat him like a number or one of many patients, but rather as a part of the team that was working toward his recovery.

Under the care of William Bockenek, MD, Johnny learned techniques for transferring to his wheelchair and performing daily activities. "He excelled in all aspects of his rehab program and was always motivated to gain additional functional improvements," Dr. Bockenek says.

READY TO PLAY

Before his accident, Johnny was a physically active student majoring in biology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He played basketball, golf and tennis. "Life for me," he says, "was enjoying activities." He credits his love for sports as one of the catalysts for his recovery.

More than four years after his accident, Johnny is again involved in sports through the Adaptive Sports



BRAIN INJURY TRAINING

CMPD turns to Carolinas Rehabilitation to train law enforcement personnel

Carolinas Rehabilitation strives to address the everyday needs of patients who have suffered brain injuries by continuing rehabilitation long after they are discharged. The staff realizes it's just as important, however, to educate the community about the different behaviors that can be associated with brain injuries. That's because behaviors associated with brain injuries are often misunderstood, especially within the community.

In an effort to educate members of the community who may deal directly with individuals who have a brain injury, staff members from Carolinas Rehabilitation Project STAR conducted "Brain Injury: an Introduction for Law-Enforcement Personnel" training for the Mecklenburg County Crisis Intervention Team. The class was part of a week-long training by a team of mental health experts on a variety of behavioral disorders and issues. Law-enforcement officers issuing warrants and transporting subjects were included in the training.

The brain injury segment introduced law-enforcement professionals to brain injury and the possible signs that could indicate a subject has sustained a brain injury. Video clips that illustrated several real-life situations were used to help law-enforcement personnel identify and interact effectively with someone who's had a brain injury. Communication and interaction strategies were emphasized, and resource information was distributed. ■

and Adventures Program (ASAP). "If it weren't for ASAP, I don't know where I would be today," Johnny says.

Johnny got involved in wheelchair basketball as soon as he received the approval from his physicians. He played a lot of basketball before the accident and wasn't about to give it up. He still has a competitive drive, and being in a wheelchair "just makes it a little more challenging," he says. "I like that."

Johnny didn't stop at basketball. He now plays wheelchair tennis and golf, along with water and snow skiing. He's also taken up hand cycling and has ridden in three "Cycle to the Sea" bike rides where participants hand-cycle 180 miles from Charlotte to North Myrtle Beach, S.C. This annual event helps raise money and awareness for ASAP.

STAYING POSITIVE

Johnny's attitude is contagious. On any given day, he can be seen volunteering at Carolinas Rehabilitation through ASAP as well as other programs.

"He's always a pleasure to be around and is always wearing a smile," says recreational therapist Erin Kuehn. "It's clear that Johnny not only cares about people being active and involved with sports but also genuinely cares for their well-being." ■

⇒ HELPING OUR COMMUNITY

For more information about brain injury training for law enforcement or other professionals through Carolinas Rehabilitation, call **1-877-REHAB51**.



SCI EDUCATION FOR CMC TRAUMA TEAM

Last summer, members of the Carolinas Rehabilitation spinal cord team conducted an educational in-service training session for the trauma team from Carolinas Medical Center. Their trauma team is involved in an initiative to focus on early rehab intervention in the Trauma Intensive Care Unit for spinal cord injury (SCI) patients. As part of this initiative, the trauma team created an SCI committee, which includes members of Carolinas Rehabilitation.

One of the committee's goals was to improve care for SCI patients and smooth the transition from

acute care to inpatient rehabilitation. The training session educated the team about inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, as well as recreational therapy and adaptive sports. Nurses and inpatient therapists addressed care of SCI patients and discussed what patients can expect at rehabilitation. Other speakers included representatives from respiratory therapy, psychology, clinical social work, outpatient therapy and the Adaptive Sports and Adventures Program.

A highlight of the day was a patient panel in which five former patients spoke of their SCI experi-



▲ The Carolinas Rehabilitation spinal cord team. Top row: (l-r) Leslie Mills, Shannon Martin, Peggy Treacy and Jane Thomas. Bottom row: (l-r) Sarah Stuckey, Natasha Wall, William Scelza, MD, Shona Metcalf and Robin Martin.

ences. They discussed ways for the medical staff to ease the patient's transition and provided suggestions for managing patient and family expectations. Their ideas and stories will help the medical staff to better prepare patients for their rehabilitation stay and what to expect after the injury. ■

OUTPATIENT SERVICES

Advanced concussion care

Carolinas Concussion Network provides most comprehensive care in the region

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that of the 1.5 million traumatic brain injuries sustained by people in the United States each year, at least 75 percent are concussions, or mild traumatic brain injuries.

For this and other reasons, getting proper treatment for concussions and post-concussive syndrome is extremely important. Carolinas Rehabilitation, in collaboration with Carolinas Medical Center (CMC), is proud to be a part of Carolinas Concussion Network (CCN). CCN offers expertise in identifying, diagnosing and managing concussions in patients of all ages.

A COMPLETE PROGRAM

Carolinas Rehabilitation houses nationally recognized physicians who are specialty trained in treating brain injuries. Our access to resources throughout CMC facilities, as well as our in-house research programs, on-site therapies, cognitive education, psychological and vocational services and driving evaluations, makes us a leader in concussion treatment. Our brain injury physiatrists will diagnose the concussion, initiate medication

trials, coordinate referrals and develop a multidisciplinary plan for the patient.

Another component of the program is access to the first head-impact monitoring system through Riddell® Sports, which is made possible through CMC and a grant from Kohl's department stores. This system measures and monitors head impacts to football players in real time and sends data to trainers and physicians on the sidelines. CCN is the first program in the nation to use this technology with younger patients. In addition to this program, CMC has been named the only credentialed ImPACT™ healthcare facility in North and South Carolina. ■

⇒ READ ALL ABOUT IT!

To learn more about Carolinas Concussion Network, visit www.carolinasrehabilitation.org and select "Outpatient Services."

Training tomorrow's experts

The residency program at Carolinas Rehabilitation

⇒ FAST FACT

The residency program at Carolinas Rehabilitation has consistently earned a five-year accreditation period—the longest cycle possible—from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. The facility is also accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, with subspecialty accreditation in brain injury, SCI and stroke rehabilitation.

Carolinas Rehabilitation is home to Carolinas Medical Center's department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and residency program. All major subspecialties in physical medicine and rehabilitation are included in this program.

The program draws its residents from across the country and benefits from a diverse faculty and their excellence in physiatry. The faculty ranks among the national leaders, especially in the areas of education, brain injury and spinal cord injury (SCI).

A COMPLETE CURRICULUM

The Carolinas Rehabilitation residency program is comprehensive,

with many unique strengths. The visiting professor program, for example, has hosted many past and current leaders in our specialty who provide up-to-date education to physicians, nurses and therapists.

Perhaps the program's greatest strength, however, is the dedication of the staff. All members of the staff have a voice in the direction, growth and future of the system. Teamwork and a family atmosphere are cherished and encouraged throughout the program.

SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF REHAB PROFESSIONALS

With the growth of Carolinas Rehabilitation, its residency program continues to grow as well. This year's class has 10 residents but will increase to up to 12 residents by 2010. The program's residents hail from around the United States, with two serving in the military prior to their residencies at Carolinas Rehabilitation.

With a teaching staff ratio greater than two to one, residents receive an intensive education with a significant amount of mentoring. Residents leave the program with the skills and expertise to practice any specialty they choose. Many enter private/academic practice soon after completing their training. Those who pursue further training are consistently placed in the fellowships of their choice. ■



^ Residents in the Carolinas Rehabilitation residency program. Back row: (l-r) Hyung Kim, MD; Chloe Bomberger, MD; Susan Swint, MD; and Katie Weatherhogg, MD. Front row: (l-r) Christine Groves, MD; Connie Edelen, MD; and Mandy Huggins, MD. Not pictured: David Scott, MD; Lisa Albanese, MD; and Sheila Natarajan, MD.

⇒ TRAIN WITH THE BEST

To learn more about our residency program, call **1-877-REHAB51** or visit www.carolinasrehabilitation.org and select "Our Physicians."



Carolinus Rehabilitation

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AWARDS & ACCOLADES

- *Modern Healthcare* ranked Carolinus Rehabilitation the largest non-profit academic rehabilitation provider in the nation.
- Carolinus Rehabilitation received Professional Research Consultants' 5-Star Award for its brain-injury unit.
- At the 2008 North Carolina Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Elizabeth Hartzog, director of occupational therapy, won the award for Outstanding Practice in Administration.
- Carolinus Rehabilitation physicians Sonya Rissmiller, MD, and Puneet Aggarwal, MD, were named 2008 "Top Doctors" by *Charlotte* magazine.
- Carolinus Rehabilitation's staff is extensively trained in rehabilitation and other subspecialties. We have five certified brain injury specialists; seven certified brain injury specialist trainers; two certified lymphedema therapists; and two neuro-IFRAH certified therapists. Thirty-nine percent of our nurses are Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurses (CRRN).
- Dana Scroggs, Carolinus Rehabilitation's assistant director of outpatient therapy services, received the 2008 Clinical Achievement Award from the North Carolina Speech, Language & Hearing Association.

HOW TO REACH US

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Playing 'fore' a good cause



Last fall, nearly 140 golfers hit the links at the Fifth Annual Adaptive Sports Golf Classic at The Peninsula Club in Huntersville.

This annual tournament is one of the largest fundraisers for the Adaptive Sports and Adventures Program (ASAP), a program sponsored by Carolinus Rehabilitation. The goal of ASAP is to provide sport and recreational opportunities to people with physical disabilities in our community at little to no cost. Last fall's event was one of the most successful to date, raising more than \$38,000 with the help of sponsors, golfers and volunteers.

In addition to community members, Carolinus Rehabilitation staff members were on hand to offer their support. Attendees included Curtis Copenhaver; William Scelza, MD; William Bockenek, MD; Matthew B. Shall, MD; Elizabeth Hartzog; and Calvin Hung. ■

⇒ JOIN US!

If you're interested in serving on the Golf Tournament Committee to assist in planning 2009's tournament, please contact an ASAP staff member at **704-355-1062**.

