

Rehab Connection

News From Your Rehabilitation Partners

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Disability and Recovery**

*Meriter's mission is
to heal this day
to teach for tomorrow
to embrace excellence always
to serve our communities –
for a lifetime of quality health care.*

WHY Wii? (PRONOUNCED "WE")

The virtual reality game system by Nintendo called Wii is sweeping the nation and reaching those who never thought they would enjoy playing a video game. Meriter's Day Rehab and Inpatient Rehab purchased the Wii unit in 2008 for use with inpatient and outpatient rehab patients to help make therapy fun and functional as a tool for OT, PT, Speech and Recreation therapy. It can be used with a wide range of diagnoses including stroke survivors and patients with traumatic brain injury.

Wii sports such as tennis, baseball, bowling or boxing programs can be used to address many problems including:

- decreased hand-eye coordination
- decreased endurance
- decreased strength and flexibility

Therapists may grade the games to the patient's skill level, for example, by initially having a patient sit during the game, then sit on a therapy ball, progress to standing using a gait belt and finally move independently. The adding of wrist weights can also increase resistance for arm strengthening during the activities.

Thinking skills which can be targeted while using the Wii include:

- problem solving
- sequencing
- divided attention
- memory

There are also programs such as the "Big Brain Academy" that includes games to specifically address various levels of cognitive skills.

For patients dealing with depression, anxiety or pain, the Wii games can provide diversion from their symptoms and help them to relax and participate in functional activities.

A variety of games ranging from fishing, hunting, darts, skiing and other leisure pursuits provide something of interest for everyone. Yes, even virtual cooking and guitar hero!

Even people who never used a video game in their life find themselves hooked on the program with its amazing ability to simulate the real activity.



(Continued on page 2)

MERITER TARGETS FALL PREVENTION

The PM&R Program is committed to Meriter's Patient Safety Initiative and to help prevent falls, promote healing and quality healthcare for our patients. As part of the admission process, an RN utilizes criteria to determine whether a patient is at risk of falling and then places that patient in the Falls Prevention Program (FPP) if at high risk.

What is PM&R doing to help in these efforts?

- All PM&R staff who work directly with patients are required to review a Fall Prevention Training Module and pass an exam annually.
- Therapists check whether the patient is at risk for falls on a daily basis by assessing the patient and reviewing nursing documentation regarding safety.
- The therapist documents consistency or lack of consistency in patient's safety behaviors with nursing observations as it relates to fall prevention.
- An FPP kit is initiated if the patient was documented as high risk for falls and placed on the Fall Prevention Program. Our role is to help make sure the contents of the FPP kit and bed/chair alarm (if needed) are used properly.



What is the FPP Kit?

Fall Prevention Kits are located on each unit and implemented by nursing staff per instructions on the bag. The kit includes:

- A pair of red socks to quickly identify patients at risk for falls.
- "Yellow" signage as designated state-wide for hospitals and health care facility Falls Prevention Programs placed: on the door, above the patient's bed on the wall, on the patient's name band, door tag, assignment board and patient's chart.
- "We Don't Want You to Fall" safety pamphlet is given to the patient and family.
- A *Call to Prevent a Fall* reminder card identifying patient is placed on the patient's tray table.
- Staff will review if the patient warrants a bed/chair alarm.

The therapist's communication with nursing staff is vital to the efforts to help prevent falls. We need to communicate discrepancies in the assessment of patient safety and their risk for falling, components of the FPP kit that should be implemented and changes in the patient's mental status or behavior that was noticed during treatment. Falls prevention is just one component of Meriter's commitment to assuring patient safety.

Why Wii? (Continued from page 1)

Hand controls vibrate as if the activities are actually being performed. There are sound effects and cheering crowds or music to motivate players. People who were previously couch potato TV watchers become interactive viewers with the motivation of the Wii. A Wii game is frequently the patient's first choice of activity during therapy. Gradually the patient concentrates more on the challenge of the game and less on their physical limitations which encourages more spontaneous movements. Intervention by therapists ensures safety to avoid falls or injuries as patients challenge their skill levels. The "Wii Fit" program helps patients track their improvements in strength, coordination, flexibility, weight management and tips for a healthier lifestyle. Personal information can be tracked in a private manner to protect patient confidentiality. Don't be surprised if today's rehab sessions include some "Wii-habilitation."

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

October

Heather Kail, OT/Hand Clinic

January

Judy Smith, PT Program Coordinator

Adam Seeger, PT/Middleton

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fishing Has No Boundaries Meriter’s 15th fishing weekend for anglers with disabilities annual event is scheduled for July 11 & 12, 2009 at Governor Nelson State Park. Participants: contact Kari Hartwig at (608) 846-4098 or khartwig@centurytel.net. Volunteers to help: contact Don Herrmann at (608) 829-0223 or donherrmann@charter.net.

Rehab Reunion Save the date! The bi annual rehab reunion event is scheduled for Thursday August 6, 2009 from 4-7p.m. at the Lussier Family Heritage Center, 3101 Lake Farm Rd. Madison, WI 53711. Rehab “graduates” from the past several years will be mailed invitations. For more information regarding this upcoming event call (608) 417-6487.

Madison Area Stroke Support Group has moved to a new location at 2180 W. Beltline Highway. For information, call (608) 417-6487. For a map of this location, visit the www.meriterhomehealth.com then go to Our Location. Meeting dates continue on the first Thursday of the month from 12:30-2:30p.m.

Spring into Sports with Meriter Sports Medicine! Meriter Sports Medicine provides quality education and services to the active adults in the greater Madison community. This spring’s events include:

- An adult soccer instructional class will run four Tuesdays on April 14, 21, 28 & May 5. Lectures will include proper warm-up, stretching, body mechanics and strengthening to prevent injury.
- The popular “Orthopedic Lecture Series” is slated for June regarding specific orthopedic issues presented by health professionals including physicians, surgeons and occupational physical therapists.

For more information or to register for future events, call (608) 417-8025 or visit:

<http://www.breakawaysports.com/index.asp>

COMMUNITY RESOURCES: DISABILITY AND RECOVERY

The rehabilitation phase of recovery is often times a long-term process, requiring a variety of services, adaptive equipment, modifications and ongoing support. As a patient, family member or caregiver, it can be difficult knowing how or where to find appropriate resources.

In an effort to support members of our community, Meriter Hospital’s Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Program has compiled information on a variety of area agencies and businesses that provide services specific to disability or recovery. The following is available in this resource:



- Adult Day Programs
- Caregiver Support & Information
- Communication
- Exercise & Fitness



Balance Enhancing Exercise Classes (Madison)

Home Health

Home Modification

Leisure & Hobbies

Senior Centers & Services

Support & Advocacy Organizations

Transportation

Travel

Work, Education & Volunteer Options



An updated version of this resource is always available at www.meriter.com/resources.

REHAB CONNECTION CONTRIBUTORS

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For more information about the program and services, call (608) 417-6177.

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PATIENT REVISITED – RODD WANGEN

Nearly one year ago, Rodd Wangen went to the Emergency Room due to the rapidly progressing weakness of his legs and arms. He was admitted to the hospital and diagnosed with Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare disorder in which the body's immune system attacks part of the peripheral nervous system. Rodd's weakness progressed quickly, requiring him to be on a ventilator to support his breathing for seven weeks. His long road to recovery included two months in Intensive Care and transition to Select Care Hospital; and later to Meriter's Day Rehabilitation Program and outpatient therapies.

Rodd's motivation and enthusiasm has been inspiring to those who have worked with him. He has always been very active; participating in marathons, bicycling, fishing and gardening. He feels that his athletic background gave him the determination to push limits and enabled him to "resist the temptation to get depressed." Rodd remembers sitting up for the first time when he was in ICU. "I could only sit for about two minutes and needed assistance to

do so. Personal motivation has been important for me because I had a choice in how hard I worked during my recovery process."

Rodd attributes much of his recovery to the strong support he gets through family, friends, church members and staff. "I've gone from needing assistance with everything, to being able to do a lot of things by myself." Rodd has begun to resume many of the activities that he enjoys such as getting outdoors and playing music. He is even taking up playing the harmonica!

