Stroke Rehabilitation at Sunnyview: It’s a Labor of “Love.”

Nearly three quarters of a million people will suffer a stroke this year. And although most will survive, stroke is the leading cause of adult disability in this country. Recovery often is a lifelong and deeply personal challenge.

“There are lots of statistics and studies, but no one is truly an ‘average’ stroke patient,” says Lynne Nicolson, MD, our chief of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital. “The various recovery factors are so highly individual. Each new patient has slightly different physical or cognitive deficits, personal needs and priorities.”

This is why Sunnyview’s inpatient and outpatient stroke rehabilitation programs are so comprehensive in scope and interdisciplinary in approach … tailored to each patient’s needs.

Stroke rehabilitation is a “center of excellence” at Sunnyview. For more than 40 years, we’ve been the region’s premier provider of comprehensive services.

Sunnyview patients consistently return to their homes, instead of nursing homes, at rates far exceeding regional or national averages. We can think of no finer example than a remarkable man named Angelo — affectionately known as “the mayor of Sunnyview.”

Playing his cards right
Every time 81-year-old Angelo Salamone plays a game of poker these days, he wins. The secret is not how Angelo plays … but why. Because for him, poker is more than a way to have fun and stay in touch with buddies. It’s therapy.

Angelo first came to Sunnyview in 1987 after a debilitating stroke. He was 60. “The nurses and therapists and social workers were so wonderful … I really can’t tell you how wonderful,” says his wife Rose. “They do everything here with love.” After three months of inpatient therapy, with steady improvements in his speech, mobility and motor skills, Angelo was able to return home.

But within weeks he and Rose were back, as new members of our Post-Stroke Support Group.

“The post-stroke group is real outpatient therapy … the only difference is we get to play.” That’s how Connie Todt, CTRS, director of recreational therapy, explains one vital aspect of the post-stroke program.

Each week, Connie and her Sunnyview colleagues create a range of therapeutic and social activities: group outings, numerical or word games — even Karaoke sing-alongs and Wii video games. One goal is for group members to exercise their physical and cognitive abilities. But equally important is a lively social environment. This is where patients and their families can catch up on news, compare notes, get recommendations, commiserate and share their everyday experiences.

“We’re so lucky to have this program,” says Rose. “Angelo looks forward to it so much. He’s in his glory there.”

Sunnyview is the only stroke specialty program in the region accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).
Welcome

The year 2008 began with a victory for patients who need access to inpatient rehabilitation. Medicare's 75 percent rule, which had been scheduled for full implementation in January 2009, has been a looming challenge for rehabilitation hospitals across the country...threatening to prevent access to critically important healthcare for tens of thousands of patients in need of intensive rehabilitation.

The regulation stipulated that 75 percent of an inpatient rehabilitation hospital’s patients must fall within a narrow listing of only 13 diagnostic categories. If a hospital was to fall below 75 percent, the hospital could lose its designation as a rehabilitation hospital and face significant reductions in reimbursement.

Legislation was introduced in both the U.S. House of Representative and the Senate to permanently establish 75 percent rule relief at 60 percent...legislation that Congress passed into law in December. I am proud to say that we worked diligently for this legislation, in conjunction with the American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association (AMRPA), the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS). Thanks go to these organizations for their hard work in helping get this legislation passed, as well to our U.S. legislators, especially Congresswoman Nita M. Lowey, who introduced the legislation, and Senator Charles E. Schumer who was a strong proponent of 75 percent rule relief.

While this was a tremendous victory, it comes at a cost, since we will see no Medicare rate increases for 18 months. We still face enormous challenges in the field of inpatient rehabilitation. I look forward to continuing to work with AMRPA, AHA and HANYS as we advocate for what people with disabilities need in their medical rehabilitation recovery.

On a positive note, we have exciting things happening at Sunnyview this year. With construction of Eddy Village Green on the Cohoes campus this fall, Eddy Cohoes Rehabilitation Center will be transitioning its rehabilitation beds to Sunnyview. We will be welcoming staff from Eddy Cohoes, as well as many new patients who will experience Sunnyview for the first time. We are proud of the outstanding rehabilitative care that we provide and look forward to providing that care to even more residents in our service area of upstate New York and New England in the coming months and years.

Please enjoy this edition of Rehabilitation Insight and be sure to read all about Sunnyview’s new technological advances, such as our new pressure mapping system and the state-of-the-art telemetry system in our cardiopulmonary department.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support of Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital. Best wishes for an enjoyable summer.

Chip Eisenman
Chief Executive Officer
Foundation Announces Roberts Scholar Award Recipients

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation is proud to announce the 2008 recipients of the Richard E. Roberts, Esq. Scholar Award: Becky Alessi, OTR and Kristen Storms, PT.

Becky achieved an associate’s degree from Hudson Valley Community College in 1996 and a BS in occupational therapy from Utica College of Syracuse University in 1997. She began her OT career at Sunnyview in 1998 working with patients with acquired brain injury (traumatic brain injury and stroke).

Kristen graduated with both a bachelor’s degree in health science (2000) and master’s degree in physical therapy (2002) from Quinnipiac College in CT. Kristen has five years of extensive experience working with neurologically impaired patients and currently works on the inpatient brain injury program. She has additional training in neurologic developmental treatment (NDT), constraint induced movement therapy, and the StimMaster functional electric stimulation bike for spinal cord injured patients.

The Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation is currently in the process of raising funds to bring the Bioness H200 and Bioness L300 systems to Sunnyview (see article below). The devices will be used for both lower extremity rehabilitation in conjunction with traditional physical therapy approaches, as well as upper extremity rehabilitation to improve quality of life. The program will target inpatient and outpatient clients treated by Sunnyview and will bring state-of-the-art therapy to help in the functional improvement of our patients.

Funds from the scholarship will allow Becky and Kristen to attend an extensive Bioness training program.

To make a gift to the Roberts Scholar Award for future training of staff, or to help purchase the Bioness devices, please call the Foundation office at (518) 382-4586 or use the attached envelope.

Sunnyview Looks to New Bioness System

In 2004, a group of visionary leaders established Bioness Inc. to help individuals with neurological impairments regain their independence. Bioness offers two award-winning medical devices designed to benefit people with stroke, multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy and spinal cord injury. These noninvasive devices, based on functional electrical stimulation (FES), help people regain mobility and independence, and improve quality of life and productivity.

The two devices include:
• the Bioness H200 Hand Rehabilitation System helps those with upper limb impairments. Utilizing mild electrical stimulation, the system helps improve the way an individual’s arm works, and can help patients get the most out of therapy, and reduce complications including muscle spasms;
• the Bioness L300 Foot Drop System assists those with foot drop regain a more normal gait. The advanced foot drop system uses mild stimulation to help an individual lift his/her foot, so that he/she can walk more safely and easily. The L300 may even eliminate the need to wear a rigid, heavy orthosis.

Donors interested in providing funding for the purchase of this groundbreaking technology should contact Kathleen Ziobrowski, executive director of Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation, (518) 382-4586.
Why a Wish List?

Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital maintains a capital budget to purchase much-needed equipment. Every item from the wish list that the Sunnyview Hospital Foundation is able to fill is one less strain on our not-for-profit budget.

Thank you for helping us to fulfill our mission to improve the lives of people with disabilities and the lives of their families!

Top priority items still needed:

**Cardiopulmonary**  $28,000
To complete the $150,000 purchase of medical telemetry for our cardiopulmonary patients. Obtaining state-of-the-art telemetry will enable Sunnyview to continue to provide prompt rehabilitation services to individuals who are at risk for cardiac arrhythmias on any unit of the hospital. Without this capability, individuals would be restricted to certain units and equipment.

**Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy**  $100,000
To enable the departments to purchase the Bioness system, a state-of-the-art functional electrical stimulation (FES) device used to treat a number of conditions including stroke, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis and incomplete spinal cord injury.

**Neurovascular**  $11,480
The use of a portable ultrasound bladder scanner is becoming more common in the rehabilitation setting as a non-invasive method of estimating bladder volume. Bladder scanners are used to screen patients for post-void residual volumes and to determine the need for intermittent catheterization based on volume rather than time. Benefits include a decreased number of invasive catheterizations, thus decreasing the potential for urinary tract infections and urethral trauma, and increasing patient satisfaction and comfort. The scanner would be used by approximately 520 patients per year and could be used up to four times a day per patient. The cost associated includes the cart for portability.

**Hospital Wide**  $3,625 each (45 needed)
Sunnyview has used low position beds successfully to minimize the potential for injury with patients who are at a risk of falling. Increasing the number of beds will allow Sunnyview to meet peak demand when there is a large number of at-risk inpatients.

**Orthopedics**  $1,625 (for two)
The Rancho Multi-Link Mobile Arm Support system allows patients with spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis and stroke with significant arm weakness to self feed, perform light hygiene tasks and light recreational tasks.

**Audiology**  $4,500
The Audiology OAE (Otoacoustic Emissions) Screener is used for infant hearing screenings. Otoacoustic emissions are very small sounds produced by a healthy human cochlea. The cochlea takes an incoming acoustic signal and sends information to the brain. In doing so, it produces distortion that can be measured objectively. Our current equipment is outdated and can no longer be supported.

**Nursing**  $15,600
To purchase IV pumps and poles which will safely and accurately infuse medications to patients.

**Wellness Center**  $2,200
To purchase a LifeSource blood pressure monitor. This monitor will allow Wellness Center members to take their own blood pressure at any time.

**Speech**  $2,598
Augmentative communications has become an integral component of services we offer at Sunnyview. Often, our patients have acquired a medical disease or condition that has limited the effectiveness of their spoken and written communication. We wish to purchase both low and high technology systems that will facilitate our patients being able to communicate on either a verbal or written level.

**Nursing – Cardiopulmonary**  $4,300 (for two)
The Datex Ohmeda Pulse Oximeter 3900 provides accurate readings for oxygen levels in the blood. It has a continuous print out capability for documentation and provides the ability to store readings in memory which is useful when performing continuous pulse oximetry readings for sleep studies. The equipment allows sleep studies to be performed which serves as documentation to justify oxygen needs for home coverage. It also identifies sleep apnea episodes allowing us to provide the best possible treatment to patients requiring interventions for this diagnosis.

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We are proud to acknowledge the following Annual Fund contributions of $100 or more and gifts-in-kind between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007. Every effort has been made to ensure an accurate and complete list.

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* denotes deceased
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<td>Marilyn Pompilio</td>
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SUNNY VIEW REHABILITATION HOSPITAL FOUNDATION  
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<td>The Hat’s Meow Chapter of The Red Hat Society, Dr. and Mrs. James Holmblad, Dr. and Mrs. Walter Grattidge, and Anonymous</td>
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* denotes deceased
Sunnyview Junior Volunteers Attend
Disney Youth Leadership Conference

Anyone who’s been involved with Sunnyview knows the important role that junior volunteers play in helping various hospital departments.

“I am always looking for ways to enhance our junior volunteer program,” said Joan Laviolette, Sunnyview’s director of volunteer services. After much research, she concluded that the Disney Youth Leadership Program held in Orlando, FL, would offer the teens a development opportunity that would help them grow as volunteers, students and young citizens.

“Many of our junior volunteers excel in school and community activities,” she added. “This program not only teaches leadership skills, it also provides hands-on experience in customer service ... Disney-style!”

The program focuses on different aspects of leadership, including understanding conflict, cooperation and interdependence among individuals, groups and institutions. Students complete journals and participate in an experiential component to practice the concepts they have learned.

Sunnyview junior volunteers were able to take part in the recent leadership program thanks to fundraisers and the support of parents/guardians. Traveling to Disney World were: Eli Feldman, Marissa Debiase, Christian Forte, Jessica Mazzo, Carly Snow, Rebecca Pike, Philip Mascitelli, Noelle Vetro, Stephanie Todt and Krista Carroll.

Ten parents and guardians were able to participate, along with Joan, Kathie Boyle, volunteer coordinator, and Connie Todt, CRT, director of recreational therapy.

“Our junior volunteers are tomorrow’s leaders,” Laviolette emphasized. “We hope that their participation in this program will continue to help them in their future endeavors in college and beyond.”

To learn more about volunteering at Sunnyview, call the volunteer office at (518) 386-3631.
Physical Therapy Department Acquires Pressure Mapping Equipment

In February, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital became the first area acute rehabilitation facility to acquire a new pressure mapping system that helps clinicians determine the suitability of a wheelchair cushion and/or to justify to insurance companies why certain wheelchair features would be most beneficial to specific patients.

According to Patricia Valenza, PT, “pressure mapping utilizes sensors that measure pressure at different parts of the sitting surface.” She notes that “the new system greatly increases quality of care for our patients, especially since it enables our nurses to monitor patients from two locations, rather than just one.” She explained that with the new system, patients can move freely throughout the unit, as well onto other units within the hospital.

In addition to patients with congestive heart failure and those with a recent heart attack, the 19-bed unit cares for patients recovering from cardiac surgery. “As an inpatient cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation unit, the telemetry system helps us monitor our patients’ endurance during the rehabilitation process.”

Donations to the Sunnyview Foundation made purchase of the equipment possible.

When Every Heartbeat Counts — State-of-the-art Telemetry

The cardiopulmonary department recently acquired the new, state-of-the-art GE ApexPro CH telemetry system, the most thorough and reliable wireless patient monitoring available today.

“Telemetry monitors a patient’s heart rhythm, almost like a continuous EKG,” says Deb Dross, RN, nurse manager. She notes that “the new system greatly increases quality of care for our patients, especially since it enables our nurses to monitor patients from two locations, rather than just one.” She explained that with the new system, patients can move freely throughout the unit, as well onto other units within the hospital.

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Sports Clinics Scheduled

The therapeutic recreation department offers a series of clinics and classes for people with disabilities, providing opportunities to explore and participate in sports and leisure activities, learn new skills and gain self confidence.

Upcoming sports clinics include:

A Day of Fishing
Friday, June 13
9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Six Mile Waterworks
Van Rensselaer Lake, Albany

A Day of Adaptive Tennis for Beginners
Friday, July 18 and
Friday, September 5
10 am - noon
Courtside Lane
Central Park, Schenectady

There is a $5 fee for each clinic. For more information, or to register, please contact Sunnyview at (518) 382-4576.

For more about our stroke services, please call 518-386-3575.
At Sunnyview, we want to be sure that we create an exceptional experience for patients and their families ... to meet and even exceed their expectations. Our patient satisfaction survey process helps us monitor how we are doing. According to recent patient satisfaction results, we are doing quite well! In fact, 95 out of 100 patients recently reported that they would recommend Sunnyview to family and friends.

The graph to the left shows the rate of discharges to home for Sunnyview, compared to national and regional averages.

Source: eRehabdata, a service provided through the American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association (AMRPA).