

CLINICAL REHAB *perspectives*

Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation Institute, located at 28th Street and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis, Minn., is the leading rehabilitation provider in the region. The Institute provides programs and services at five Allina hospitals — Abbott Northwestern in Minneapolis, United in St. Paul, Unity Hospital in Fridley, Mercy in Coon Rapids and Buffalo Hospital in Buffalo — and outpatient care at 18 community-based Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Centers.

More than 60 years of “making lives work”

The original Sister Kenny Institute opened in December 1942 in Minneapolis. The Institute is named after Sister Elizabeth Kenny, an Australian woman trained in nursing (the title “Sister” is used in British countries to designate head nurse). Elizabeth Kenny’s work with polio patients in the 1940s became a foundation for modern physical therapy.

Sister Kenny’s tradition of innovative, effective rehabilitation therapy continues today. Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute’s teams of specialists provide comprehensive treatment for stroke, spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, spine rehab, work and sports-related injuries, and neurological and muscular disorders including arthritis, multiple sclerosis and speech-language disorders.

Welcome to the first edition!



Welcome to the first edition of the Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation Institute’s *Clinical Rehab Perspectives*. We want this publication to be a source of information for

you on what’s happening at the Institute and in the field of rehabilitation. To help keep you up to date, we plan to publish *Clinical Rehab Perspectives* every three months.

Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute offers innovative patient services, advanced technology, clinical research and professional education. We currently serve more than 65,000 patients in five hospitals and at 15 outpatient clinics each year.

If you have story suggestions or comments, contact us at sisterkenny@allina.com.

Sincerely,



Jennine Speier, MD, medical director,
Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute

Managing spinal cord injuries

Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute’s Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Program works with patients, families and primary health care providers to develop individualized care plans, including an extensive educational program that prepares patients for the medical, physical, emotional and social issues they will face when they return home.

Other key services include:

- support groups and counseling
- wheelchair clinic to help patients choose the right wheelchair
- seating clinic using a pressure mapping system to ensure proper cushioning and support
- rehabilitation nursing program to teach patients and family members to manage bowel, bladder and skin problems.

“We also try to interact with the primary care physician at the time of a patient’s discharge with a summary of our recommendations. It’s helpful if the primary caregiver becomes familiar with the patient’s needs in a non-emergency situation,” says Marilyn Thompson, MD.

Key management issues for SCI patients include urinary system and bowel care, pressure sores, respiratory complications, spasticity, osteoporosis and issues related to autonomic nervous system dysfunction.

Problems can quickly escalate if not managed appropriately. For example, because the autonomic nervous system is damaged, a SCI patient can experience life-threatening high blood pressure in response to relatively minor stress. *continued on page 2*

2004 Outcome Data for Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute vs. National Average

(patients with traumatic and non-traumatic spinal cord injuries)

Functional independence measure* gain per day is above the national average.

Average length of stay is well below national average.

*FIM is a widely used, standardized instrument used to measure changes in a patient's ability to perform 18 daily activities that are central to independence.

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"Many of our patients will turn to their primary caregivers for issues like urinary tract infections and skin care," says Thompson. "We encourage primary caregivers to listen carefully to the patient because the patients have all been taught to be aware of these problems and the risks they face.

"We also recommend that virtually all SCI patients see a rehabilitation specialist and urologist at least once a year," says Thompson. "And we are available at any time to help answer questions, offer recommendations and make suggestions when problems arise."

For consultation with a physician from the Spinal Cord Injury Program, call 612-863-8947. For more information about services for SCI patients, call 612-863-4457.

SCI Facts

Nearly 200,000 people in the United States are living with spinal cord injuries (SCI).

An estimated 11,000 Americans sustain a SCI each year.

More than half of the people who sustain SCI are 15 to 29 years old.

Males are at higher risk than females, and African Americans are at higher risk than whites for SCI.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of SCI in people under age 65.

Wheelchair maintenance tips

A little attention goes a long way when it comes to wheelchair maintenance. Here's what Steve Alarik, rehabilitation technician, recommends:

- Keep the wheelchair clean. Use bicycle cleaner and polish when necessary. "Just keeping things clean will keep your wheelchair running for a long time," says Alarik.
- Check moving parts regularly and tighten anything that has loosened.
- Visit a bicycle shop if your manual wheelchair needs some maintenance work. Most wheelchair maintenance is comparable to basic bicycle mechanics.
- If your manual wheelchair needs more extensive work or adjustments, or if you use a power wheelchair, have a wheelchair specialist do the work. Contact your wheelchair supplier for more information.

Wheelchair technology continues to improve

Like other technologies, wheelchair technology is constantly evolving and improving. Staff from the Wheelchair Assessment Clinic can work with you to determine insurance coverage for any of the following newest wheelchair options:

Standing wheelchairs. Available as manual or power-operated, standing wheelchairs allow the user to be supported and mobile in a standing position. They are used primarily in work settings.

Bariatric wheelchairs. Just as obesity is affecting more people in the general population, it is also affecting more wheelchair users. Until recently there were few wheelchair options for the bariatric population. Today, nearly all manufacturers offer bariatric wheelchairs.

iBot. The Independence iBot 3000 Mobility System can climb and descend curbs and stairs, raise the user to eye level and navigate many types of uneven terrain. The manufacturer has established strict criteria for who can safely use the device. Unfortunately, the cost is prohibitive for most.

Power assist manual wheelchairs. These wheelchairs are outfitted to provide an added power boost to allow individuals to continue using a manual chair when shoulder pain, weakness or fatigue might otherwise force them to go to a powered wheelchair.

For more information about these and other wheelchair options, call Rehabilitation Equipment Services, 612-863-5181.



Wheelchair Assessment Clinic assists in equipment decisions

Sister Kenny Institute offers an Outpatient Wheelchair Assessment Clinic that is available to patients with a physician referral. Patients receive an occupational and physical therapy evaluation. A registered nurse is also involved in the evaluation and follow-up. The clinic staff makes recommendations for equipment that the patient can try at home before purchasing. Staff also completes documentation necessary for insurance coverage. For more information, call Jean Wasilowski, OT, Rehabilitation Equipment Services, at 612-863-5181.

Physical therapists pursue advanced training, board certification

A growing number of physical therapists at Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center are advancing their expertise through an orthopaedic clinical specialist board certification program offered by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialists (ABPTS).

The board certification is awarded to physical therapists meeting approved requirements. To obtain board certification, candidates must submit evidence of required clinical practice in a specialty area. They must also successfully complete a rigorous written examination, which demonstrates specialized knowledge and advanced clinical proficiency.

"This is the highest clinical specialty certification that a physical therapist can

earn from the American Physical Therapy Association," says Kurt Otto, director, Rehabilitation Therapies. "Only the top percentage of candidates taking the exam receive the certification."

The ABPTS offers certification in seven areas: cardiovascular and pulmonary, clinical electrophysiology, geriatrics, neurology, orthopaedics, pediatrics and sports.

"A few years ago we had one board certified therapist out of 30. Now we have four board certified therapists out of 35," says Otto. In addition to providing excellent patient care, the board certified therapists help to mentor other therapists. "This helps to elevate our practice throughout the system," says Otto.

Driving simulator study: potential assessment tool for cognitively impaired drivers



Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute is participating in a federally funded study to assess whether a driving simulator can be used to help cognitively impaired drivers recognize their own driving skills and deficits.

"An interactive simulator enables a person to experience realistic outcomes of his or her performance," says Erica Stern, PHD, OTR/L, FAOTA, associate professor at the University of Minnesota, a collaborative partner in the study.

While the simulator may ultimately be useful for individuals with a wide range of disabilities, the current project focuses on individuals with brain injury from stroke, tumor and trauma.

Other participants in the study include the Courage Center and the University of Vermont. For more information about the study, contact Erica Sterna at 612-626-2799 or stern001@umn.edu, or Elin Schold Davis at escholddavis@aota.org.

Currently, Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center has four physical therapists who are board certified in orthopaedics. They are:

Elizabeth Ihry, MPT, OCS

Special interests: *spine and shoulder rehabilitation, manual therapy and orthopaedics*

Location: *Minneapolis*

Carla James, MPT, OCS

Special interests: *orthopaedics, sports physical therapy, osteoporosis and women's health*

Location: *White Bear Lake*

Amy Prose, MPT, OCS

Special interests: *orthopaedics, sports physical therapy and aquatics*

Location: *White Bear Lake*

Megan Vaught, MPT, OCS

Special interests: *chronic musculoskeletal problems and women's health issues*

Location: *Minneapolis*

"Only the top percentage of candidates taking the exam receive the certification."

Kurt Otto, director, Rehabilitation Therapies



Clinician profile: Sara Rohde, OTR/L

Sara Rohde is an occupational therapist at the Kenny Kids Pediatric Rehabilitation Program at Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids, Minn. Before joining the Sister Kenny staff at Mercy nine years ago, Rohde worked in the state's school system. Her areas of specialty include working with children who have feeding disorders, and providing education

and training in sensory processing disorders. "The thing I most enjoy about my job is hearing a hearty belly laugh from one of my patients," said Rohde. "I also love watching a parent's expression when they see their child do something for the first time, things most other parents would consider ordinary or take for granted."

November

11-13

34th Annual Orthopaedic and Trauma Seminar

Upcoming conference

The 34th Annual Orthopaedic and Trauma Seminar will be Nov. 11-13 at the Minneapolis Convention Center, located at 1301 2nd Ave. S. One of the longest running orthopaedic courses in the country, this seminar provides participants with an

opportunity to interact directly with the proponents and practitioners of new research, knowledge and management techniques related to orthopaedic surgery. To register or for more information, visit www.orthotrauma.us.

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