

# CLINICAL REHAB *perspective s*

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 community-based Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Centers.

The **Advances in Rehabilitation through Science and Technology** conference will be held on Friday, June 2, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. Presentations include “Interventional Radiology Procedures for Stroke,” “Surgical and Medical Advances Following Spinal Cord Injury,” “Robotics, Virtual Reality and Rehabilitation” and “Advances in Technology to Take Rehabilitation Home.” For more information, contact 612-262-5030 or [education@allina.com](mailto:education@allina.com).

The **Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute Golf Tournament for Individuals with Physical Disabilities** will be held on Friday, Aug. 4, at the Braemar Golf Course in Edina, Minnesota. Competitors can play on the regulation 18-hole or executive 9-hole course. For more information about the tournament and how to participate, call 612-863-5712.

## *Stroke rehabilitation: Comprehensive services, intensive therapy enhance outcomes*

Carl Powers already knew what it meant to fight for his life. He grew up in a violent Chicago neighborhood and spent much of his youth fending off street gang thugs. Then he joined the Marines, was shipped off to Viet Nam and was wounded in combat, earning two Purple Hearts.

But it was high blood pressure and a stroke that nearly ended his life last September. Powers, 55, had just returned from a meeting at his church. While in the shower, he suddenly lost feeling on his right side and slid down into the bathtub. He managed to crawl out and call for help.

Powers has only dim memories of the next six days at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. As he became more alert, he also became frightened. He was unable to talk, feed himself or walk. “I wondered, what could they do to help me?” said Powers. “The experience was scarier to me than being in combat.”

After he was transferred to Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, Powers began to realize that he had a long, hard journey ahead.

“One of the critical factors in rehabilitation after a stroke is helping patients understand that there is always hope,” said Barbara Seizert, MD, a physiatrist who treated Powers. “It depends on their work and on our work — we emphasize that patients and families are our partners.”

With a dedicated team of stroke rehabilitation specialists, state-of-the-art



*Retired Marine Carl Powers says the hardest battle he has had to fight is recovering from a stroke.*

interventional technology and facilities offering a range of therapeutic options, the Institute’s inpatient stroke rehabilitation program achieves outcomes that are among the best in the nation (see box on page 2).

Achieving good outcomes begins with the stroke team’s close partnership with acute care physicians at Abbott Northwestern and at United Hospital. “We address the causes of stroke and the risk factors that may contribute to subsequent strokes,” said Seizert. “We’ve also improved our ability to evaluate cognitive function and there’s a greater emphasis on getting the patient back home as soon as possible — so there’s more intensive work being done in the hospital to get them there.”

The stroke rehabilitation team includes physiatrists, certified rehabilitation nurses, and

*continued on page 2*



## Letter from our leader

Exciting projects are underway at Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. We continue our efforts to develop the Sister Kenny Research Center, which will enable the Institute to continue its rich history conducting innovative research that leads to more effective rehabilitative techniques. We are also working closely with our colleagues at the Allina Medical Clinic in order to ensure that their patients receive the best rehabilitative care possible.

The Institute continues to grow. The number of admissions to our rehabilitation unit at United Hospital grew substantially in 2005. Also in 2005, we opened two new Sister Kenny Spine Centers in Edina and Woodbury. The Spine Centers provide specialized, non-surgical treatment for

patients with low back or neck pain. We are currently evaluating our options for future locations. We also recently expanded our outpatient physical therapy services in Elk River (see related article on p.3).

For more information about what's happening at Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, visit [www.sisterkennyinstitute.com](http://www.sisterkennyinstitute.com).

Richard Sturgeon, MD  
vice president  
Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute

### Inpatient Stroke Rehabilitation Program

**Average patient age**

67 (compared to national average age of 69)

**Age range**

20-97 years

**Average length of stay**

12.6 days

**Percent discharged to community (home or assisted living)**

76 percent  
(compared to national average of 68 percent)

**Functional Independence Measure Gain (translating to one hour decrease in burden of care)**

19

**Patient satisfaction**

98 percent rated their overall stay as excellent or good

**Percent of patients referred from within hospital**

Abbott Northwestern: 56 percent  
United Hospital: 91 percent

**Percent of patients referred from other hospitals**

Abbott Northwestern: 38 percent  
United Hospital: 5 percent

## Stroke rehabilitation *continued from front cover*

therapists who have received specialized certification in stroke treatment.

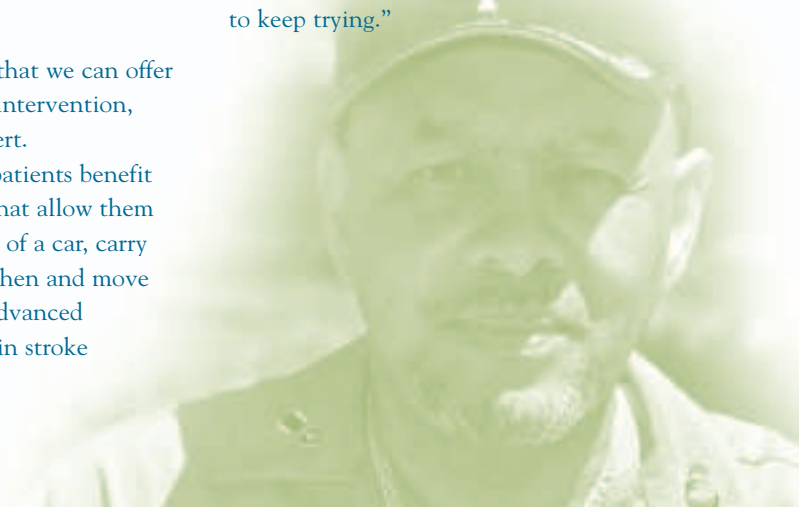
**Stroke team members pride themselves in being responsive to the needs of patients and families. They work closely with each other, coordinating each patient's care to maximize the opportunities to regain function and independence while still in the hospital.**

"One of our strengths is that we can offer an aggressive 12-hour day of intervention, seven days a week," said Seizert.

At the Institute, stroke patients benefit from real-life environments that allow them to practice getting in and out of a car, carry out basic chores in a real kitchen and move about in a simulated store. Advanced technologies are also helpful in stroke

rehabilitation, including robotic-aided therapy, Interactive Rehabilitation Exercise and partial weight bearing gait therapy. Stroke patients also have access to a peer visitor program and specialized education curriculum for inpatients, and an education course for post-stroke patients and their families.

After one month at the Institute, Powers returned home. Three months after his stroke, he was back at work. He continues to receive outpatient therapy and is as committed to recovery as he was at the start. "It's all a process," he said. "You've just got to keep trying."



# Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center: Holistic approach and staff expertise make a difference

Despite bouts with two painful and potentially debilitating conditions in the past year, Pat Crisham, 71, is back to her normal activities. That includes ice skating, ballet, swimming, and helping elderly and sick neighbors with errands, medical appointments and household chores.

With help from Ann Johnson, PT, from the Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center in Fridley, and several of her colleagues, Crisham found relief from arthritic knee pain and also recovered from bilateral frozen shoulders.

“Ann made full use of our appointments,” said Crisham. Crisham’s knee pain was somewhat vague and intermittent, so Johnson conducted careful interviews, tests and “hands on” therapy to discover the cause and track Crisham’s progress. She made recommendations about muscle strengthening and body alignment to treat the pain and slow the progression of the arthritis. When Johnson learned that Crisham enjoyed swimming, she referred her to an aquatic therapy specialist in the clinic, Beth Holme, who designed a pool program to complement Crisham’s dry land program.

All was well until several months later when Crisham suddenly developed frozen shoulders. “It was so painful, I could barely open a car door,” said Crisham. The problem started on her right side, but quickly spread to the left as Crisham overcompensated for the pain and immobility.

She returned to see Johnson. “Her skill in putting everything together to get my shoulders working was most impressive,” says Crisham.

Johnson determined that Crisham’s posture and a muscle imbalance predisposed her to shoulder joint injury. That, combined with her regular lap swimming and an especially active weekend helping neighbors

clean up from a storm, had caused tendonitis and bursitis.

“We take a holistic approach in evaluating patients and recommending therapy,” said Johnson. “Often a problem affecting a limb or a joint has a connection to core body strength, posture and alignment.

“We also have a strong emphasis on manual therapy — we go beyond having the patient repeat their home therapy program in the clinic. We focus on soft tissue manipulation and joint mobility to help the patient recover function more quickly.”

Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center uses evidence-based best practice guidelines for common orthopaedic diagnoses, ensuring the best possible care at all locations throughout the system. In addition, Johnson says that many therapists have special areas of interest and advanced training, providing a high level of expertise for a range of problems.

Crisham, who is retired after 40 years of working and teaching in health care and bioethics, says her experience at Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center was inspiring. “It seems to be totally focused on its purpose — doing what is important for patients and making a difference in their lives.”

Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center is a network of physical therapy clinics located throughout the Twin Cities and central Minnesota. The newest clinic is located in Elk River. The clinics offer rehabilitation services for a range of injuries and illnesses, including low back pain, sports injuries, TMJ (temporomandibular joint) dysfunction, lymphedema, fibromyalgia, osteoporosis and more.

For more information, call 612-863-4466 or visit [www.sisterkennyinstitute.com](http://www.sisterkennyinstitute.com).



*Patient Pat Crisham worked with physical therapist Ann Johnson to find relief from frozen shoulders.*

## Safe Transfers Every Person Succeeds (STEPS)

A new initiative designed to increase safety and communication related to transfers has proven to be very successful at the Institute. The initiative, Safe Transfers Every Person Succeeds (STEPS), was developed in the fall of 2003 and implemented completely in 2005. STEPS includes decision-making algorithms, common terminology and step-by-step instructions for each type of transfer. It also includes a process by which nurses and therapists work together to identify the best type of transfer for each patient.

To date, STEPS has been implemented at the Institute's inpatient rehabilitation units at Abbott Northwestern and Untied hospitals. Nursing and therapy staff have participated in extensive training and a competency evaluation related to transfers.

"Since implementing STEPS, we have seen a decrease in staff injuries related to transfers

as well as increased communication about transfers on the units," said Jennifer Theis, an occupational therapist who led the task force that developed STEPS. "Even though the initiative has come to an end, we are not done yet. We are committed to ourselves, our patients and their families regarding performing safe transfers every time we work with someone, so we will continue to monitor our compliance with the STEPS procedures. We have begun an orientation version of STEPS for new staff at Abbott Northwestern. We are also in the midst of editing videos on safe transfers and will make this available across other Institute locations, including Mercy and Unity hospitals."

Theis also plans to present this project at an interdisciplinary conference this fall as a means of disseminating the project outside of the Institute.

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## Telerehabilitation serves patients in remote locations

Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute is using the latest telecommunications technology to enhance rehabilitation services in communities where access to such services is limited.

Telerehabilitation involves using advanced video-conferencing technology to permit patients and their local therapists or caregivers to consult with physiatrists and therapists at the Institute. Teleclinics are held weekly in collaboration with health care providers in Cass Lake, Minn., and on the island of American Samoa, located in the South Pacific Ocean.

The teleclinics allow the Institute's rehabilitation specialists to observe, examine and assess patients at a distance, while providing education and training about a variety of conditions, therapies and techniques.

"Because rehabilitation is a high-touch intervention, some may wonder about using technology like this to deliver patient care," said Tim Bowman, rehabilitation services manager. "But our therapists have been using technology to enhance rehabilitation therapies for more than 10 years — we have

embedded technology as another tool that allows us to better serve our patients."

The teleclinics are currently funded by grants. However, in collaboration with other rehabilitation centers around the country, the Institute is tracking outcomes and evaluating the effectiveness of the teleclinics to gather support for third-party reimbursement of the service.



"Telerehabilitation offers a unique opportunity to improve health care services in remote and underserved locations," said Bowman.

For more information, visit [www.sisterkennyinstitute.com/ahs/skinet/page/ar\\_tele](http://www.sisterkennyinstitute.com/ahs/skinet/page/ar_tele).

Physical therapist Beth Ihry, left, demonstrates a cervical compression test during a telerehabilitation clinic.

# DAAN: community initiative focuses on inspiring wise nutrition and activity choices

Earlier this year, DAAN was launched at a grand opening celebration at Buffalo Hospital's Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center. DAAN (dā on) is a new initiative designed to promote a healthy, balanced life by inspiring wise nutrition and activity choices.

For the first time, poor nutrition and physical inactivity are the leading cause of preventable death in rural America. With the number of obese or overweight children tripling over the past two decades and 30 percent of U.S. adults now obese — doubling in the last 25 years — radical change is needed today.

“Our personal choices are literally, slowly killing us by increasing our risk of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and various cancers,” said Brett Oden, MD, sports medicine specialist and medical director of Buffalo Hospital's Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center.



*The initiative's name comes from the Native American word "DAAN." DAAN offers hands-on elementary curriculum, adult wellness education and a series of fitness assessments.*

*To learn more, visit [www.buffalohospital.org](http://www.buffalohospital.org).*

*Brett Oden, MD, a sports medicine specialist and medical director of Buffalo Hospital's Sister Kenny Sports & Physical Therapy Center (right), demonstrates a fitness assessment at DAAN's grand opening celebration.*

## Focus on a facility: *Unity Hospital*

Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute at Unity Hospital, located in Fridley, offers rehabilitative services to treat any short- and long-term condition or disability. Physicians and therapists provide rehabilitative care to hospital patients on orthopaedic, neuroscience and cardiology units who have experienced a trauma or surgery, and those who have complex medical conditions.

Outpatient rehabilitation programs are also available, including lymphedema therapy and wound care, as well as multi-disciplinary care (occupational, physical and speech-language therapy) for patients who have experienced a stroke, brain injury or who have neurological or degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis. Patients who receive

multi-disciplinary care work together with the staff to set goals in order to achieve maximum function. Treatment focuses on improving function such as walking, swallowing, reading, dressing, homemaking and remembering.



For more information about rehabilitation services offered at Unity Hospital, visit [www.mercyunity.com](http://www.mercyunity.com).

Unity Hospital today (left), and an artist rendering of what Unity will look like after extensive construction is completed this summer.



Clinician  
PROFILE :

Rozina Bhimani, RN



Rozina Bhimani, RN

Rozina Bhimani started her career in the business industry, but after just one day on the job she knew it wasn't the right fit.

"After a bit of soul searching, I knew I wanted to do something to help people; human interaction is very important to me," said Bhimani.

She went back to school to become a licensed practical nurse, and worked for 10 years in a long-term care facility and in clinics. She eventually became a registered nurse and worked in a cardiac surgical ICU for several years. After finishing her bachelor's of science in nursing, she went on to earn a master's degree in family practice. She is currently working toward a doctorate degree with a focus on research and education, and an emphasis on helping patients with disabilities.

"I guess I've always known on some level

that nursing was for me," said Bhimani. "The profession is very satisfying as well as fascinating. I've learned so much during my nursing career."

Since 2004, Bhimani has worked in Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute's Baclofen Program at Abbott Northwestern Hospital helping patients with spasticity.

"I really enjoy developing relationships with my patients and helping improve their quality of life," she said.

One of the things Bhimani enjoys about working at the Institute is being involved in innovative research and care.

"At Sister Kenny, we don't just accept the status quo," she said. "We're not afraid to look for new therapies, diagnostics or techniques in order to provide the best care we can for our patients."

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