



the whole story

Rehabilitation that focuses on the whole person

Dear Friends,



Autumn has come to New York and with it much to report regarding our plans to reinvigorate the research program at the Rusk Institute. I am very pleased to welcome Tamara Bushnik, Ph.D. to our faculty as the new Director of Research. Dr. Bushnik received her Doctorate in Neuroscience at the University of Ottawa in 1992 and most recently was on the professional staff of the Rehabilitation Medicine Department of Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. While at Santa Clara, she served as Project Co-Director of the Spinal Cord Injury Model System of Care, funded by the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). She also continuously served there as Project Co-Director of the NIDRR funded Northern California Traumatic Brain Injury Model System of Care as well as Director of Research for the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine. Dr. Bushnik's career has been marked by numerous accomplishments in the realms of research and leadership. Immediately prior to her arrival in New York, she was principle

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Steven R. Flanagan, M.D.

*Chairman and Medical Director of
The Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine*

Women's Health – Focusing on Wellness

Ting-Ting Kuo, PT, DPT, WCS, CLT

Tucked away on the fourth floor of Rusk Institute on 34th street is the Outpatient Physical Therapy Women's Health unit. The Women's Health program began in 2000 and was initially housed in the general Outpatient Physical Therapy department on the ground floor of Rusk. Since then, the program has expanded sufficiently to earn a distinct space. The program offers a full complement of Physical Therapy services for conditions related to pregnancy and postpartum, pelvic floor dysfunction including pelvic pain, weakness, and urinary incontinence, osteoporosis, cancer rehabilitation, and lymphedema therapy. Therapists on the unit provide extensive rehabilitation services daily to women seeking relief from pain, musculoskeletal and neurological ailments, and difficulties performing functional activities.

On any given day, a Physical Therapist may treat a breast cancer survivor, struggling to regain strength and flexibility, a woman with urinary leakage, who is uncomfortable when out in the community, or an expectant mother experiencing low back pain caused by pregnancy. The therapist custom designs a program with the optimal treatment approach for each patient. She combines manual therapy, with flexibility, strength and cardiovascular training, and provides education on posture and precautions.

The program's philosophy emphasizes well-being and return to optimal health and wellness. The Physical Therapists that have chosen to work in this specialty area are extensively trained and highly skilled. Their dedication and commitment result in exceptional care and treatment.

Their patients become more than just clients; they are partners, working towards common goals to maximize function, health and well being. ●

For more information about the services provided by the Women's Health Outpatient Physical Therapy, please visit www.rusk institute.org or call (212) 263-5601.



Elizabeth focuses on regaining posture, flexibility, and arm strength after breast cancer treatment.

Initiative for Women With Disabilities Elly & Steve Hammerman Health and Wellness Center At NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases

Connie Lam, Project Coordinator

The Initiative for Women with Disabilities Elly and Steve Hammerman Health and Wellness Center (IWD) is a multi-disciplinary Center that empowers women and young girls with physical disabilities to pursue healthy lifestyles. As a premier Center of Excellence for women with physical disabilities, the IWD offers a full complement of services including: gynecology and primary care, nutrition consultations, mind-body physical therapy, social work services, and support groups.

The Center offers accessible space, services and programs which are tailored to meet the needs of women with disabilities. The site is equipped with a fully accessible examination room, a wheelchair-accessible weight scale as well as a comfortable and adjustable gynecology examination table with handrails for additional safety. In addition to providing medical services, the Center offers classes in Yoga, Tai Chi, Belly Dance, Strength & Tone, Pilates, Self Defense, Arthritis Exercise, and Contemporary Dance. The classes are designed to meet individual's abilities and exercise may be performed in a seated and/or standing position. The Center is the only one of its kind in the Tri-State area in that it also offers a full compliment of wellness services including Acupuncture, Reiki, Reflexology and Massage Therapy.

In addition to providing the aforementioned services, the Center assists participants with disabilities to return to productive lives in the community. IWD participant, Gigi Pardo-Lord has multiple disabilities and was diagnosed with lupus in 1992 and Sjogren's syndrome in 1993. Eight years ago, she was introduced to the IWD by her Physical Therapist at NYU Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, and she felt a sense of hope that she hadn't felt in a long time. Gigi participates in exercise fitness classes and wellness services offered at the Center, which enable her to manage her disabilities effectively. Gigi's motivation for exercising is to maintain her overall physical health, well being, and personal growth. The fitness programs at the IWD encourage mindful activities to help her discover more about herself. For the past few years, Gigi has dedicated her life to enriching the lives of others at the IWD by assisting new participants in classes and actively recommending the support services of IWD. "Giving back to the community is a way to help others to experience some of the opportunities I have experienced." – Pardo-Lord, IWD participant. ●

For further information and to register for all services and programs at the IWD call 212-598-6429 or visit our web site for a complete description of the IWD services and programs: <http://www.iwdwellness.org>.



Gigi Pardo-Lord (right) at her weekly Strength and Tone class with her instructor.

INITIATIVE FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES ELLY AND STEVE HAMMERMAN HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER

A Multi-Disciplinary Women's Center:
Empowering Women to
Pursue a Healthy Lifestyle

NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases
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DEAR FRIENDS *Continued from page 1*

investigator on two grants awarded by NIDRR and amassed a solid history of other grants awards from NIDRR, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and The Health Trust. Not surprisingly, she has an extensive record of scientific disseminations and has given numerous presentations throughout North America.

Her recognition as a leader in rehabilitation research is noted by her numerous awards and accomplishments. She received the Distinguished Member Award from the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine in 2008, and has served as the Chair of the Program Planning Committee in addition to being elected as Vice-President Elect of the same organization. She is the current Chair of the TBI Model Systems Dissemination Committee and has co-chaired the Program Committee for the 2nd and 3rd Federal Interagency Conferences on TBI.

But there is more news on our research program. Teresa Ashman, Ph.D will be joining Dr. Bushnik's team in December 2009. Dr. Ashman is an accomplished neuropsychology researcher who has an impressive record of grant support from NIDRR and has collaborated on numerous other federally funded projects. She has published extensively on topics related to traumatic brain

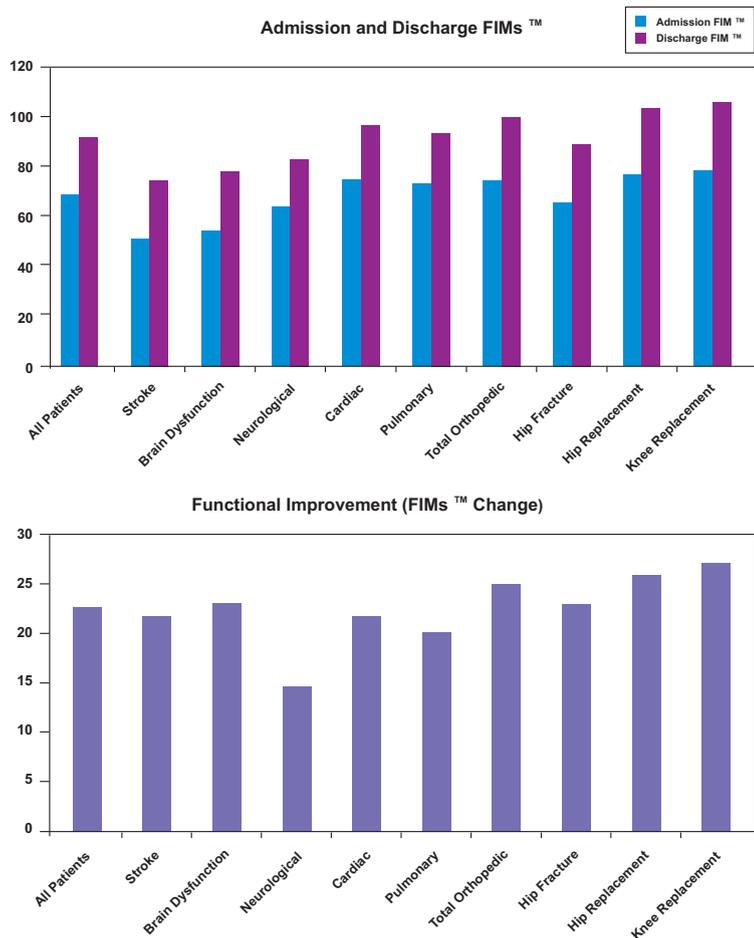
injury in addition to lecturing throughout the country at national scientific meetings. Furthermore, we have also successfully recruited a young clinician-scientist, Preeti Raghavan, M.D. who is currently an NIH funded researcher who is examining mechanisms of motor recovery following stroke. Dr. Raghavan will join our faculty in April.

Other faculty members have also been busy presenting at both national and international meetings. Dr. Mary Hibbard presented 2 lectures during a recent visit to India pertaining to TBI. Drs. Leonard Diller, Donna Langenbahn, Joseph Rath and Rose Lynn Scherr presented their research findings at the annual conference of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. Both Drs. Ira Rashbaum and Jeffrey Cohen will present at his year's Annual Assembly of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. This is of course in addition to many other members of the Rusk family who continually spread the word of our work and many accomplishments.

I am delighted to report on these research and dissemination updates. Our plan is to further enhance our research, in line with our vision to improve health care services to all those we treat. ●

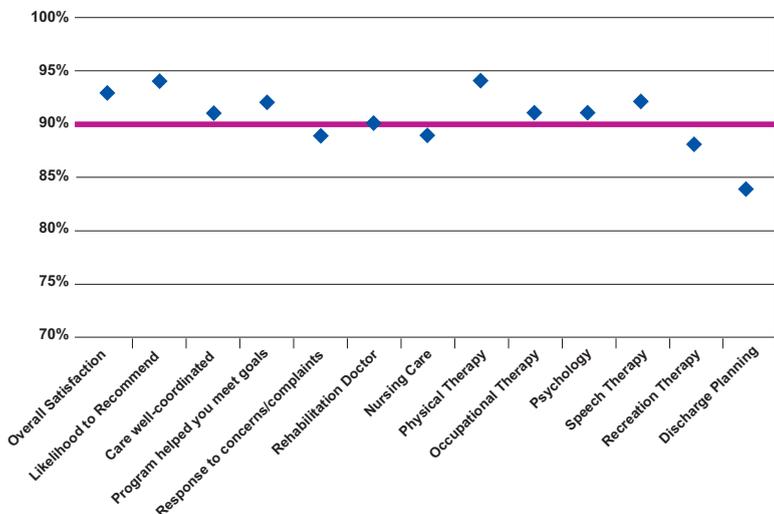
PATIENT OUTCOMES

More than 2400 adult patients received inpatient rehabilitation treatment at Rusk during 2008. The average age of our adult patients was 71, compared to the regional average age of 69. Patients were admitted for inpatient rehabilitation with a myriad of impairments, but the most common included orthopedic conditions (41%), cardiac/pulmonary conditions (24%), stroke (12%), neurological conditions (7%), and brain dysfunctions (8%). Most of our patients were admitted from our own acute care hospitals, Tisch Hospital and NYUHJD (73%). This adjacency provides a breadth of knowledge and subspecialty consultants, which is rarely available in freestanding inpatient rehabilitation facilities. The average length of stay was 14 days and led to an average improvement of 23 points on the FIM™, a well-recognized measure of functional independence, indicating a reduced burden of care for these individuals. Seventy-five percent (75%) of our patients were discharged to the community, above the regional standard of 71%.



PATIENT SATISFACTION

Post discharge satisfaction scores were collected from 27% of patients using the Press-Ganey Inpatient Rehabilitation Survey to allow for benchmark comparisons. 93% of patients reported that they were satisfied with their admission and 94% would likely recommend Rusk to family and friends in need of inpatient rehabilitation. 91% of patients felt that the care and treatment they received was well coordinated, and 92% felt that the therapy they received helped them meet their rehab goals. As indicated on the graph below, department-specific results indicated fairly high ratings for therapy services.



Comments from our Patients

"The therapists made me feel that I could do what they asked me to do and had been afraid to do all my life. They were right."

"Each individual was professional, courteous, and very patient with all my questions."

"Every detail of discharge and health care was explained and attended to."

"You operate at the highest level of professionalism, care and performance possible."

A Vocational Rehabilitation Success Story

Kristin Kvaternik, CRC, Senior Rehabilitation Counselor
 Robert Lindsey, CRC, LMHC, Director, Vocational Services

In January 2007, Matthew Chaney's life took an abrupt and unwelcome change of course after an automobile accident left him with a fractured hip and pelvis, sciatic nerve damage, and a head injury. After undergoing hip surgery and months of rehabilitation in his native Philadelphia and meeting with his surgeon for a follow-up visit, he knew for certain that his successful career in retail management was over. Despite ten years of experience in his field, Matthew realized that he would not regain the physical capacity required to perform his job.

Unemployed and just married, Matthew moved to New York, where his new wife had a job. Desperately wanting to return to the workforce himself, he contacted the state Education Department's local Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) office for help and was referred to the Rusk Institute for vocational rehabilitation services. In the Vocational Services Department at Rusk, Matthew began the Diagnostic Vocational Evaluation (DVE) program to assess his interests and skills, and to facilitate appropriate goal planning. "At the time of the evaluation, I was feeling depressed about my situation and worried about the future," Matthew said; he had gone on several interviews that seemed to go awry when he would discuss the accident and reasons for unemployment. Matthew started the DVE feeling that he "did not have any skills and didn't have much value to any company." That feeling soon subsided. Matthew knew he was in the right place. With his evaluator's guidance, Matthew identified transferable skills and an interest in the clerical field; however, in order for him to become marketable in this new field, he would need to enhance his computer skills through participation in the Vocational Services Computer Training Program.

Upon completion of his training, Matthew met with a counselor who helped him revise his résumé and begin a job search. Together, they refined his interview techniques, and figured out how to frame his disability and employment gap more positively. Matthew presented to the Department's Business Advisory Committee, which led to an interview for a receptionist job at Donlin, Recano & Company, Inc., a longstanding member of the committee. The interview was a success. Matthew has been employed at Donlin Recano for the past six months.

Both Matthew and his employers are happy with the placement. "Matthew is an organized, efficient team player who possesses the old-fashioned quality of common sense," said Elizabeth Ellison, Donlin's Director of Marketing and Communications, and Myrna Giusti, Office Manager and Matthew's direct supervisor. "From our experience, we almost have to ask the question, what disabilities? The fact is, the most impressive thing about Rusk's Vocational Services is the painless, no-fee process of providing quality employees with a complete package of dedication, current skills, and work ethic." The company recently hired three additional candidates referred through Vocational Services. Matthew also feels positively about his experience at Rusk. "I feel like this program helped me so much and really changed the direction my life was heading." ●





An NYU Clinician learns more about one of the post acute care facilities featured at an interactive event in September 2009, sponsored by the Office of Continuing Care.

Office of Continuing Care: Education, Communication and Collaboration

Adrienne Goldberg, MPT

At this critical juncture in health care, all eyes are on health care providers to provide seamless, efficient and effective treatment across the continuum of care. In order to do this successfully, patients and families need to be well informed and involved in the process of care. In addition, channels of communication need to be open for clinicians across departments and even facilities, with a central focus on the patient.

Here at NYU, the Office of Continuing Care (OCC) focuses on enhancing patient and family education, as well as communication between clinicians in various settings. Departments within NYU are coming together to benefit patients and families through initiatives such as the weekly Transition from the Hospital class, which provides families with the vocabulary necessary to negotiate the continuum of care. Another interdisciplinary effort spearheaded by OCC has produced educational materials and a bedside support team to assist patients and families to make educated choices about feeding tube placement.

In order to enhance collaboration between settings, the OCC has organized visits to area subacute centers, Long Term Acute Care (LTAC) hospitals, day programs and hospice hospitals. During these visits, NYU staff learn directly from their clinical counterparts

about each facility's scope of Medical and Rehabilitation services. Liaisons from subacute rehab facilities and LTAC hospitals have also come to NYU to share information about their facilities' rehabilitation and clinical capabilities and to discuss the transition of care process. An interactive lunchtime panel presentation is now offered regularly at NYU, featuring representatives from various post acute care facilities and a presentation on their programs and services.

The OCC is also developing tools to capture the most up-to-date information on post acute care facilities. For example, the new 'clinically complex matrix' allows NYU clinicians to sort through area nursing facilities and LTAC hospitals by borough or specialty service to identify possible placement options for complex patients. Doctors, nurses, and Social Workers in the Emergency Department now have access to a new tool as well. The OCC has compiled a directory, listing names and phone numbers of physicians, nurse managers, and admissions directors at area skilled nursing homes. The directory allows the team to speak directly with a clinician at the sending facility and improve communication about patients being (re)admitted to NYU through the Emergency Room.

The Office of Continuing Care is proud to support the medical center in transitioning patients to the right place at the right time. ●

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The Whole Story is published by the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine. Please call 212-263-8830 for more information about our programs and services.

For information on how to donate to the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine please call Christopher E. Sickels at 212-404-3646.

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