2ND ANNUAL
“WALK TO VICTORY OVER PARALYSIS”
24 HOUR STEP-A-THON

As many of you know, the first 24 hour Step-A-Thon last year was a huge success, and this year we hope to make it even bigger and better. The name is different but the goals are the same – to invite former patients, friend, family members, and staff to work together to keep at least one treadmill running for 24 hours straight from 9am on Saturday to 9am on Sunday in an effort to raise money for the NeuroRecovery Network and Magee’s Locomotor Training Clinic. The Locomotor Training Program of the NRN is a form of progressive activity-based therapy that has been shown to provide benefits for those with neurologic dysfunction. Because last year was such a huge success at Magee, this year the other 11 sites in the NeuroRecovery Network will be joining in on the fun. The “Walk to Victory over Paralysis” will take place simultaneously at all twelve NeuroRecovery Network sites across the country!

*Want to participate or send a donation? Please visit the following sites:


http://blog.mageerehab.org/2014/05/21/save-the-date-walk-it-out-24-hour-step-a-thon-returns-july-19-20/

What:  Team Reeve 24-hour “Walk to Victory over Paralysis” (Formerly the Walk It Out: 24 Hour Challenge).

When:  July 19-20, 2014

Where:  Magee Riverfront [1500 S Christopher Columbus Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19147]
SPINAL CORD RESEARCH & EDUCATION

NEW RESEARCH ON PRESSURE ULCERATION – USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN HEALTHCARE

Magee Rehabilitation and Drexel University School of Bioengineering, Science and Health Systems are about to initiate a unique new research project combining the use of technology with the clinical assessment of a patient at high risk for developing pressure related wounds.

Drs Neidrauer, Zubkov and Weingarten of Drexel University’s School of Bioengineering have been developing a device that allows a noninvasive method of assessing tissue damage at multiple depths under the skin. Use of this device would provide the clinician an evidence-based method of assessing deep tissue injury within the skin and subcutaneous (or under the skin) body tissues and forewarn of potential tissue damage, which, if left unattended could develop into a more severe and debilitating open skin pressure ulcer (or wound). Pressure ulcers are one of the leading secondary complications following major catastrophic illnesses, and for those living with chronic physical disabilities, and are the focus of state, national and international attention because of the devastating impact on health, function, quality of life and financial resources.

As Magee specializes in the care of individuals with complex medical, cognitive and physical disabilities, we are always working to educate consumers and prevent any secondary complications which could lead to further debilitation and possibly prolonged and agonizing medical procedures and hospitalizations. Therefore, Magee is a perfect clinical environment to pilot Drexel’s new device. It will be tested first with healthy subjects to further refine the mechanics of the device, calibration and procedural considerations. In the second phase, we will be piloting on individuals admitted to Magee’s acute rehab Spinal Cord Injury Program over the next year. Following the data collection and analysis from this pilot study, we hope to produce results that could lead to a larger scale project to further evaluate validity, reliability and responsiveness of this measurement device on a larger population. If this device proves effective, it could augment early detection and intervention for one of the most unwelcome complications in our healthcare environment today.

Magee’s Spinal Cord Injury and Wound Ostomy teams are happy to be partnering with Drexel’s faculty on such a worthwhile project!

UPPER EXTREMITY RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The Upper Extremity (UE) Reconstruction Program of the Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley (RSCICDV) is available for anyone with ANY neurologic diagnosis that presents with a problem in their upper limb. Magee Occupational Therapy staff are collaborating with Dr. Charles Leinberry of the Rothman Institute and Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, to provide a clinical program that focuses on problems with upper extremity neurologic dysfunction. Monthly clinics are held at Magee Rehab’s Main Hospital in the first floor Follow Up Clinic, and include evaluations and recommendations from Dr. Leinberry and Magee’s Occupational Therapy staff. Magee’s Case Managers also play a critical role in helping individuals sort out the resources necessary to benefit from this program. The UE Reconstruction Program will focus on issues related to skeletal reconstruction, tendon releases, or possibly tendon transfers covering the shoulder down through the hand.

If you would like more information on accessing this Clinical Evaluation program, please contact the Outpatient Follow Up Clinic at (215) 587-3116.

HELP MAGEE HELP PATIENTS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY!

Veterans with SCI needed to help volunteer at Magee!

If you are a veteran with a spinal cord injury – or know someone who is - we want your help. Magee is developing a new patient health education program to begin in the future.

To make this new program as effective as possible, we are asking individuals with SCI to help us plan and test this new education program. Your input is needed! We are hoping to recruit veterans with SCI to this project and we welcome non-veterans with SCI, as well.

Contact Marci Ruediger, Director of Performance Excellence, at (215) 587-3454 or at mruediger@mageerehab.org.
NEW PUBLICATIONS/PRESENTATIONS BY RSCICDV STAFF


4. Mary Schmidt Read PT, DPT, MS. Therapeutic Technology for Persons with SCI and/or Other Neurologic Dysfunction. Geisinger Medical Center, October 2013.

5. Mary Schmidt Read PT, DPT, MS. Rehabilitation Readiness. Geisinger Medical Center, October 2013.


7. Mary Schmidt Read, PT, DPT, MS. Clinical Trainings continuing around the nation for two clinical trials - one in SCI Recovery and one for Spasticity Management in Multiple Sclerosis.

Philadelphia OUCH! Race

August 24, 2014 - Fairmount Park
5k - 10k - 15k
Progressive Walk/Run/Roll. Choose your finishing distance during the race!

For more information visit www.ouchrace.com.

DISSERTATION RESEARCH STUDY

Title: The Role of Cognitive Distortions in Adaptation to Disability and Perceived Quality of Life in Spinal Cord Injury Survivors

Participants Needed: If you are 18 or older, able to read and understand English, and have suffered a traumatic spinal cord injury, you may qualify as a participant.

Description of the study: The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how one's thoughts might impact the ability to adapt to life post-injury as well as impact one's quality of life. The information gained will help psychologists and other medical staff identify ways to help survivors successfully adjust to life post-injury and add to the growing research on rehabilitation psychology.

Procedure: Participation is completely voluntary and all participants will remain anonymous. If you choose to participate in the present study, please go to the following link: http://goo.gl/p3jeAU

The questionnaire will require that you consent before beginning. While some of the questions may cause emotional reaction, it is believed that there is no risk to participating in the study. The questionnaire will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. You may have a caregiver present with you to assist if needed.

If you have any further questions about this research, feel free to contact me at kerripe@pcom.edu
CAPABILITIES OF UPPER EXTREMITY – ONGOING RESEARCH

The Spinal Cord Injury Center has received a two-year grant from the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation to continue development of an objective evaluation of arm and hand function in people with cervical spinal cord injury. Currently there is not an accepted standard test for upper extremity function to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. We have already developed a standardized assessment, called the Capabilities of Upper Extremity Test (CUE-T), which has demonstrated good test-retest reliability in people with chronic spinal cord injury. Now we will test people who have recently been injured or who are about to have surgery to improve arm or hand function, in order to determine how well the CUE-T detects changes in their ability to use their arms and hands. We have recruited researchers from Case Western - Metro Health in Cleveland, OH; Shepherd Center in Atlanta, GA; and Frazier Rehabilitation Center in Louisville, KY to work with us on the project. Thank you to all the participants who volunteered for preliminary testing of the CUE-T; we couldn’t have gotten to this point without you. For any questions concerning this research or if you think you may be a candidate for this phase of the study, please contact the RSCICD at (215) 955-6579.

PARTICIPANTS WANTED!

As part of the Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of Delaware Valley's current research, a small team of researchers and research assistants are conducting interviews with people who are at least 60 years old, and have been living with spinal cord injury for 5 years or more. We are also interested in interviewing your family caregiver or paid caregiver, too. Finally, we would also like to interview 5 individuals who've been injured for less than 5 years, too. The interview will occur at your home and will take less than 90 minutes. In this research project we are interested in improving our understanding, in your words, of the experience of aging with a spinal cord injury, the changes in your abilities to participate in activities, the care you need and receive, and your satisfaction with your routines. Your experiences and those of your caregivers will greatly help us learn about any changing health needs and develop programs to meet those needs. The interview is audiotaped and you will have the opportunity to review your transcribed interview to make sure it captures what you've told the researcher. As a thank you, you will receive a gift card in the amount of $25.00.

If you are interested in participating in the research by being interviewed by one of the research team members, please call Dr. Stephen Kern at (215) 503-8010, or email Stephen.kern@jefferson.edu

SPINAL CORD SOCIETY

The Spinal Cord Society is a large grass roots organization with thousands of members throughout North America and other countries. Its goal is cure of chronic spinal cord injury paralysis. The Spinal Cord Society puts 100% of its funding into research for the cure of spinal cord dysfunction. The Spinal Cord Society meets at Magee Rehabilitation Hospital on the 6th floor at 1 pm on the first Saturday of every month. If you would like to support this research, consider attending one of these meetings.

For more information, please contact Chris Cellucci at cellucci@ursinus.edu or (610) 296-7429, or Dennis Ledger at dledger@csc.com or (856) 468-4401.
ONGOING RESEARCH OF THE RSCICDV

Current

1. Multicenter, Randomized, Double-blind, Placebo-controlled parallel group study to evaluate the Efficacy, Safety and Pharmacokinetics of SUN13837 Injection in Adult Subjects with Acute Spinal Cord Injury. Sponsor: Asubio


4. Responsiveness of the Capabilities of the Upper Extremity Test. Sponsor: Craig H. Neilsen Foundation

5. Predicting neurological recovery after traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI). Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care

6. Enhancement and evaluation of the SCI-FI Instrument (v.2). Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care


8. EQUATE: Equity and Quality in assistive Technology study. Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care

9. Zoledronic Acid to prevent bone loss after acute spinal cord injury. Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care

10. Understanding the health care needs of individuals aging with spinal cord injury. Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care

11. The Value of MRI and DTI as biomarkers for classifying acute spinal cord injury. Sponsor: Department of Defense

Completed


3. Reliability of the Capabilities of the Upper Extremity Test. Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care


5. A Phase 1 Safety Study of GRNOPC1 in Patients with Neurologically complete, subacute, spinal cord injury. Sponsor: Geron Corporation

6. Investigation of assistive technology for mobility used by individuals with spinal cord injury. Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care

7. UAB Index of Motor Recovery – Validation of an outcome measure for motor recovery in incomplete spinal cord injury. Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care

8. Development and validation of the thoracic-lumbar control scale to measure strength and coordination of trunk muscles. Sponsor: NIDRR supported through SCI Model System of Care

9. Spasticity and Joint Position Testing in Individuals with SCI. Sponsor: Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley

10. A 15-Week, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Parallel-Group, Multi-Center Trial of Pregabalin for the Treatment of Chronic Central Neuropathic Pain After Spinal Cord Injury. Sponsor: Pfizer Pharmaceuticals

SPINAL CORD INJURY SUPPORT

OSTOMY & SKIN PEER MENTORS

We are recruiting and utilizing peer mentors for two specialized situations. The first situation involves pressure ulcer mentors. These specially trained volunteers have experienced pressure ulcers and will work with patients who are struggling with or resisting pressure ulcer prevention strategies. It is our hope that the perspectives of these mentors will be helpful in motivating patients to adhere to recommended pressure ulcer prevention strategies. Mentors are also assisting with patient education classes run by our certified wound nurses. Family members may also benefit from working with these mentors in terms of learning strategies and tips for helping their loved ones promote skin health.

The second set of mentors are comprised of volunteers who have ostomies. They will work with patients who are considering an ostomy or who have recently had ostomy surgery. They will be able to answer questions from the perspective of someone who has “been there,” and should provide much needed reassurance and helpful tips to patients and their family members or caregivers.

For more information or to request a peer consultation, please contact Marie Protesto, RN, BSN at (215) 587-3174 or peers@mageerehab.org.

SCI PEERS, sharing experiences

SCI-Peers are trained volunteers who have learned to cope with their own spinal cord injuries. The peers are available to meet with you to answer questions regarding life after a spinal cord injury. SCI-Peers have various levels of injury, as well as various life experiences.

To request a peer consultation, or to volunteer as a mentor, contact Marie Protesto, RN, BSN at (215) 587-3174 or peers@mageerehab.org.

JOIN THE E-COMMUNITY!

The E-Community is a e-mail list of individuals with spinal cord injuries, amputations, strokes, and brain injuries kept by the Peer Coordinators for the dissemination of information from new innovations to classifieds. It is a place to ask questions and share your knowledge. Ever wonder where the Ask a Peer info comes from on the Magee Blog? This is it.

The E-Community grew from the Magee Peer Program. The Magee Peer Program is a group of people who have lived through an injury, illness or dysfunction and have successful transitioned back to their lives. The peer program was started in the 90’s. As the peer program grew, the number of e-mails on file grew. Along with peer e-mails, Magee alumni e-mail addresses along with other survivors who are interested in all the information shared through this network have been included.

For more information or to be added to the list contact us at peers@mageerehab.org with your name and disability.

SCI FAMILY PEERS

Family Peer Mentors are family members and/or loved ones of individuals who have sustained a SCI and have successfully transitioned to living life with a disability. They are volunteers who are specially trained to guide and provide SCI related information and experiences to families and loved ones of newly injured individuals.

Mentoring can be done in the form of participating in the family group which is held twice monthly at Magee or contacting a new family by telephone or face to face if possible. Given the geographic area Magee serves, we attempt to be creative and flexible with mentoring requests.

For more information or to become a Family Peer Mentor, please contact Ruth Black, LCSW at (215) 587-3030 or rblack@mageerehab.org.

SCI PEER MENTOR PROGRAM

In Partnership with
MAGEE RECREATION RESOURCES

Physical activity is an integral part of physical and psychological well being. Everyone, regardless of ability or disability, should have access to recreation, we are actively recruiting new athletes to join our teams. If you already play a wheelchair sport and would like more information about our program, or if you are interested in a recreation activity that we do not yet offer, please contact us!

Magee Wheelchair Sports teams are always looking for volunteers who would like to learn more about wheelchair sports and help during fundraisers, at practices and tournaments. If you have any questions or would like more information on any of our teams, please email sports@mageerehab.org or call (215) 587-3412.

MAGEE CO-ED WHEELCHAIR SPORTS TEAMS

BASKETBALL: MAGEE SPOKESMEN

Practices are held every Wednesday evening from 6:30 pm—9 pm (Sept.—May).

Contact: sports@mageerehab.org or (215) 587-3412.

Location: Carousel House (corner of Belmont Ave. & Ave. of the Republic, Philadelphia, PA 19131)

RUGBY: MAGEE EAGLES

Practices are held Tuesday evenings from 6:30 pm—9 pm (Sept.—May).

Contact: sports@mageerehab.org or (215) 587-3412.

Location: Carousel House (corner of Belmont Ave. & Avenue of the Republic, Philadelphia, PA 19131)

TENNIS: MAGEE FREEDOMS

Practices are held each Sunday from 12 pm—2 pm (10 am—12 pm in the summer).

Contact: sports@mageerehab.org or (215) 587-3412.

Location: Cherry Hill Health & Racquet Club (1820 Old Cuthbert Rd., Cherry Hill, NJ 08034)

RACING: Magee will sponsor hand-cycle and wheelchair athletes for the Rothman 8K or Full or Half Marathon on November 16 & 17. For more info contact sports@mageerehab.org or (215) 587-3412.

Currently our Power Soccer and Softball teams are not practicing, but if you would like more information about either of those activities, please contact sports@mageerehab.org or call (215) 587-3412.

Our wheelchair athletes recognize how fortunate we are to have a rehab hospital such as Magee fund our sports program, and we give back to the community by performing outreach events in the Philadelphia area. This season our teams performed demonstrations at many universities and organizations including: University of Pennsylvania, Rowan University, West Chester University, YMCA West Chester Wells Fargo Center, Radnor High School, University of the Sciences Philadelphia, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, and a Boy Scout Camp.

We encourage everyone to become involved in physical activity, whether it is in a competitive sport or at an intramural level. Please join us as we add more recreational opportunities in the coming months and years.

UPCOMING ADAPTIVE SPORT EVENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST:

- **PA Center for Adaptive Sports**: Promotes adapted recreation, and sport opportunities for persons with physical and neurological disabilities. Rowing and Cycling. [www.centeronline.com](http://www.centeronline.com)

- **IMABLE Foundation**: Created to build on the active lifestyles that founder, Chris Kaag, promotes for individuals with disabilities. [www.getupandmove.org](http://www.getupandmove.org)

- **Magee Wheelchair Tennis Tournament**: August 8-10 at Cherry Hill Racquet Club, 1820 Old Cuthbert Rd, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

- **Beast of the East Rugby Tournament**: November 14-16 at RiverWinds Community Center, 1000 Riverwinds Dr, West Deptford, NJ 08086

- **Dan Sullivan Classic Basketball Tournament**: December 12-14 at RiverWinds Community Center, 1000 Riverwinds Dr, West Deptford, NJ 08086

** All Sporting Events listed have Free Admission
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

LEGAL CLINIC FOR THE DISABLED

The Legal Clinic for the Disabled provides free legal services to low-income people with physical disabilities in Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties, Pennsylvania.

Since 1990, the Legal Clinic for the Disabled, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with offices at Magee Rehabilitation Hospital, has helped thousands of people. We help victims of domestic violence get legal protection from their abusers. We represent victims of identity theft and consumer fraud. We help parents and caregivers access healthcare for their children. We write wills, powers of attorney and living wills. Most of our clients experience physical limitations in their daily activities, and many have suffered catastrophic injuries or illnesses like stroke, spinal cord or brain injury, multiple sclerosis, cancer, advanced diabetes, glaucoma, AIDS, amputation or epilepsy. Our services help them overcome legal problems and continue living comfortably and independently in the community.

For more information about our clinic, please visit our Web site at: www.lcphilpa.org.

LEGAL CLINIC PROFILE: SUYEN WOO JOHNSON

“(LCD) was a blessing. It took a great burden off of me and reduced my stress.”

I had the pleasure of working with Suyen Woo Johnson, a stroke survivor, part of the Magee family, and an all-around inspiring person. Ms. Johnson had a stroke in July 2010 and has been active in both her rehabilitation and in the Magee stroke community. LCD, which works with many Magee inpatients and outpatients, helped her to get the deed to her home transferred into her name, which she had been unable to do for some time due to everything else going on in her life. I recently interviewed Ms. Johnson to talk about her stroke, rehabilitation, and the impact of legal services.

What were the immediate physical effects of your stroke?
“I was affected on my entire right side and had no use of my right arm or right leg. I also had double vision and slurred speech.”

How are all of those issues doing now?
“I can walk on my own with a small brace. I have regained a lot of movement back in my arm, but am still working on extending the arm, finger functioning, and turning my wrist. My vision is corrected and my speech is clear.”

What has been the most important aspect of your rehabilitation?
“Never giving up. I have learned patience. Prior to the stroke, I worked as a dialysis technician, where I was always the caregiver and worked with patients to encourage them through difficulty. Now I am on the other side of it and have had to learn to listen and learn. It has been a humbling experience. I have had wonderful therapists at Magee who have provided consistent support, have challenged me in a positive way, and have been inventive in finding solutions to support every new level of rehabilitation as I’ve gained functioning.”

What has been the most challenging part of your rehabilitation?
“It’s a marathon. It takes time and you don’t always get everything you want in terms of regaining movement or strength, or as fast as you’d like it. I have had a focus on one challenge and then another – first being able to walk, then on my arm, now also on reading, focus, concentration, and verbally expressing myself.”

What advice or encouragement would you give to other patients who are or have gone through a similar situation?
“There is life after stroke. We (stroke survivors) all have to help each other. We have to be patient, keep working, and never give up, because there is always hope. Whenever I get frustrated with something, like slurring my words when I get upset, I tell myself to slow down, take a deep breath, and navigate one obstacle at a time.”

Please tell me about your involvement in the Magee community?
“I am an active part of the Stroke Club and the Stroke Support Group. Through these groups, we are able to gather, socialize, engage in activities like movies and computer training, discuss current challenges, and network and learn from each other’s challenges and successes.”

What impact has legal services had on your life?
“It took a great burden off of me and reduced my stress. For a long time, I thought I wouldn’t be able to do anything about the problem and wasn’t really sure how to find help. It was a blessing. It is one part of all of the supports that have been provided to me, and I want to pay it forward in any way I can in the community.”
PATIENT RESOURCE CENTER

The Patient Resource Center is located on the 6th floor of the Main Hospital. Feel free to stop by. We have tons of interesting fiction, a number of best seller books including notable books that made Oprah Winfrey’s Book Club list. There are about 600 leisure/romance/my mystery novels to choose from as well as a broad selection of relevant professional periodicals. You may have noticed that we have computers spaced just right for patient, visitor and staff access and to supplement these resources, we also have an assortment of DVDs.

Please allow us the opportunity to provide you with extraordinary customer service and an enviable user friendly environment.

You may contact Venus Bradley at (215) 587-3146 with any questions, concerns or suggestions.

THINK FIRST

To help prevent disabling head and spinal cord injuries among children, teens and young adults, Magee’s Think First Program holds dynamic presentations at schools. Our program is part of the nationally coordinated Think First program. Presentations consist of a video, injury prevention lessons and testimonials from adults with disabilities.

If you have a spinal cord injury or brain injury and are interested in changing behaviors and saving lives, please consider joining Think First and speaking to students. Since Magee values your experience we will reimburse you for your time.

If you are interested or know of a school that would like to host one of our assemblies, please call Joe Davis or Keith Newerla, Think First Coordinators, at (215) 587-3400.

WE NEED YOU FOR OUR PATIENT AND FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL

We would love to add a few more members to our dynamic Patient and Family advisory Council, which is now in its second year. In particular, we are seeking members with disabilities other than spinal cord injury to diversify our group a little more.

This lively group meets every other month to discuss ways to improve the patient experience at Magee. Conversations are led by a chair person selected from the former patients and their family members, and there are plenty of Magee staff on hand to share information and help formulate plans for improvement. Topics range from patient and family education to the admission and discharge processes, food, weekend therapy, psychology and case management support, equipment, peer mentors, environment of care, etc.

If you are interested in joining the conversation or for additional information, contact Meg Rider, Guest Relations and Volunteer Services Manager, at 215-587-3186 or m rider@mageerehab.org. To download an application to be considered for the Council, please visit www.mageerehab.org and click on the Caregivers & Patients tab.

WANTED: COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MAGEE’S INFECTION PREVENTION COMMITTEE

If you have interest or expertise and are able to assist our Infection Prevention Committee in the prevention of infection at Magee, we would love to hear from you. Input from former patients and other community stakeholders is needed. Your perspective as a health care consumer is invaluable to us, as we work to determine the best courses of action in the prevention and treatment of infections at Magee.

The committee meets six times per year at the Hospital, usually on the first Thursday of the month, from 1-2 pm. (Feb, April, June, August, Oct, Dec.)

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Carol Vinci at 215-587-3333 or cvinci@mageerehab.org.

WANTED: COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MAGEE’S SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

We are looking for community members with interest and/or experience in performance improvement or safety to participate on our Safety and Quality Committee. This inter-disciplinary committee meets monthly, usually on the 3rd Thursday of the month, from 12-1:30. The perspective of community members is extremely valuable as we review safety data and make decisions about process changes and priorities.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Karen Ayres at 215-587-3451 or kayres@mageerehab.org.
JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON THE Magee BLOG!

Magee is offering fans a another way to connect - the Magee blog; believe@Magee. The blog covers a range of topics related to disability, health and prevention, and includes photos, videos, interviews and great information about things happening at Magee and beyond. The blog also includes a special Ask a Peer section where users will have the opportunity to ask our peer mentors questions about living with a disability, from travel tips to advice to caregiver support.

Visit believe@Magee today at blog.mageerehab.org.

POSTS FROM THE Magee BLOG:

THE LATEST IN ROBOTICS, NOW AT Magee

As anyone who follows this blog knows, we are tech-crazy here at Magee – especially when it comes to robotics. In our search to find the latest and greatest technology to benefit our patients during rehabilitation, we discovered the Vector. We saw in action. And we knew we had to have it.

So here’s the part where you’re asking, “So what is the Vector and why is it such a big deal?” The Vector is a robotic gait training system – in other words, it’s walking with the help of a robot. Yeah, we told you it was cool.

The Vector allows orthopedic, neurologic and amputee patients to practice walking and balancing on solid ground without the use of an assistive device – and without the risk of falling. Because there is no fall risk, patients can get up on their feet much sooner than previously possible. And trust me – there is nothing greater than seeing a patient walk for the first time after coming to Magee.

Patients are strapped into a harness attached to an overhead track that wraps around our third floor gym. Unlike other track systems, the Vector uses a robotic trolley on a conductive rail that senses the patients’ movement and follows along — there is no pulling required. What’s even cooler is that it’s totally programmable based on the individual patient. Therapists can set the parameters for body weight support (the Vector would support less and less as the patient progressed) and fall limitations. Because the system allows the user to turn and go in all directions (instead of straight forward like traditional tracks), patients can practice stepping, jogging, dancing, grapevining, whatever.

This isn’t just the first Vector in Philadelphia (which it is). Or even just the first in Pennsylvania (which it also is). Magee’s Vector system is the first in the northeast United States. It’s also the longest track in the WHOLE WORLD. You read that right. No one has a track longer than ours, giving our patients more opportunities and space for practice.

Staff have been trained on this system, and it is already in constant use. In fact, you know when someone is training on it when the sounds of clapping, laughter and excitement begin spreading through the floor. Who knew a robot could elicit such a beautiful human response? We had a feeling.

To learn more about this system, visit Bioness.com.

COMBATING THE CHRONIC EFFECTS OF YOUR DESK JOB WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Last month, we touched on the topic of the detrimental impact of sedentary jobs on your health and 5 ways to combat those chronic effects. If you read that post, you may have been surprised to find out that the total amount of time you spend sitting still in a day has some serious associated health risks regardless of how much you exercise. Yup, that’s right. Even if you work a generous amount of the day on your feet, your risk remains.

But what if you can’t stand and walk around well? When you are living with a disability that makes standing or moving about difficult, you may spend a great deal of time sitting — but that doesn’t mean you cannot stay active.

Whether you use a wheelchair as your primary means of mobility or you simply have difficulty walking a lot, the same formula still applies: Sit still less. Move more. However you do it, just get movin’.

Here are a few tips for keeping on the move, even when moving is difficult.

Get off your derrière. Every 15 minutes. Yes, this is the same # 1 tip as our last post on this topic. Why? Because it’s THAT important. Relieving pressure on your buttocks is critical in protecting your skin from pressure ulcers, but beyond that, changing positions frequently is also critical in the prevention of chronic illness. This may mean doing a push-up for pressure relief in your wheelchair a few times every 15 minutes or if you are safely able to stand, standing up for 3-5 minutes with whatever support you need.

Wheel away. If you are a wheelchair user, at least once an hour, pull away from your desk or stationary position and make a loop around the office, the building, or outdoors if you can. Whatever it takes to get the blood pumping in your body for a few minutes several times throughout the day will do the trick.

Move it. After you’ve got your blood pumping with a quick excursion, take another minute or two to move and stretch your arms and legs. If you can move your legs, pump your ankles and do leg kicks and marching while you are sitting. To get your upper body moving, do some neck, arm and wrist circles.

It’s tempting to blow through the day without a “movement” break, but doing so is simply not healthy. There are some real serious risks associated with sitting still all day including cardiovascular disease, stroke, high blood pressure, heart attack and even cancer. To decrease your risk of these diseases, make a point to MOVE around once every hour and do some sort of pressure relief or standing every 15 minutes. Sounds relatively simple, but it is not easy to break old habits. To be successful, set a timer on your smartphone or other device as a reminder to MOVE. 15 minutes will seem like 5 seconds when you are not thinking about it and trust me — you will forget!