

First Rehab & Recovery Wing Patient Returns Home

Pam Rapkowicz—*wife, mother of three now-grown children, and coordinator of the hospitalist program at Berkshire Medical Center—led a busy, active life when osteoarthritis in both knees began to significantly affect her lifestyle about seven years ago. Before the constant pain set in, Pam enjoyed golfing, walking, working out at the gym, and riding with her husband on his motorcycle.*

But once the pain intensified, with her knee joints functioning bone-on-bone, there were, in her words, “so many limitations.” Going up and down stairs at work became problematic. And pursuing the leisure activities she enjoyed became impossible. Even being a motorcycle passenger became difficult, and every ten minutes or so, she’d have to ask her husband to stop so she could take a break.

Now 52, Pam and her Boston-area surgeon decided that the time was right for a total knee replacement. Pam entered Massachusetts General Hospital for the surgery on August 9, 2007.

Making a Rehab Choice

Before her hospital admission, Pam, a savvy healthcare consumer, researched her options for post-hospital care. Living in Pittsfield, she had heard about the new Rehab & Recovery Wing opening in July at Fairview Commons in Great Barrington (see article, page 4). She was immediately attracted to the idea of a private room, and a number of other amenities, like



Working Towards Her Goal

Pam Rapkowicz exercises guided by her primary physical therapist, Kurt Armbrust, whom she describes as “tremendous.”

the Internet café with free Internet access, appealed to her as well.

So Pam attended the open house Fairview Commons hosted to introduce the community to its new concept in healthcare and newly remodeled wing. “I was totally blown away when I walked into that wing,” she recalls. After meeting the staff, she was sure: She made the decision to receive her inpatient rehab at Fairview Commons. She even picked out the room she wanted to stay in.

Although there were plenty of rehab options closer to home, Pam felt that the combination of quality care and the unexpected level of amenities was worth the extra travel. Her family members all came “to check it out, and it didn’t take long to get here at all,” she reported. The whole family was pleased with her choice. “Going to a rehab center made a big difference in my recuperation,”

she added. “I didn’t have to worry about making meals...or going home with all this equipment.”

The Treatment Plan

On August 14, Pam was discharged from Mass General to Fairview Commons. The first day of her stay, a rehab therapist evaluated her condition and created a care plan. While at Fairview Commons, Pam received:

- Physical therapy six days a week for an hour a day, focusing on improving range of motion, strengthening, and increasing tolerance for weight bearing
- A dedicated CPM machine for use in her room throughout the day
- Daily occupational therapy to strengthen her upper body
- Group occupational therapy with other knee-replacement patients, where the group learned how to maneuver around the house and perform household chores using assistive devices, shared ideas, and encouraged one another
- Around-the-clock, post-surgical nursing care and assistance with activities of daily living

Achieving Results

Pam was discharged to home and thrice-weekly, outpatient physical therapy on August 24, 2007. When her surgeon approves, she’ll return to work. Pleased with her rehab results just three weeks after surgery, Pam is already planning for a total replacement of her other knee next spring—and a return stay at Fairview Commons.▲



The Patient’s Perspective

As the first person to complete rehab in the new Rehab & Recovery Wing at Fairview Commons, here’s what Pam Rapkowicz had to say about her experience.

About the Care: “Rehab was a very collaborative process. The staff was very

encouraging, and they accommodated my schedule.... The nursing staff is phenomenal. There isn’t anything they won’t do for you.... Everyone works as a team. They have a lot of camaraderie, and it shows.”

About the Wing: “It’s like a spa. The color scheme is wonderful.... The private room was very important.... And you can go to the Internet café, stay up-to-date, and sit and have coffee or tea anytime.”

About the Meal Service: “The cook comes before every meal and asks what you want. If you’re not in your room, they come and find you.... It’s quite a service.”

About the Overall Experience: “I’m grateful to have had the opportunity to be a patient at Fairview Commons. Because of their positive attitude, dedicated work, and healing environment, I was able to obtain my goal to return home.”▲