

reConnections

JOURNAL FOR **WAKEMED REHAB**

Then to Now

*WakeMed Rehab Hospital
Opening Day, 1990*

6 DECADES OF GROWTH

**WHAT'S NEXT FOR
NEUROPSYCHOLOGY?**

MEET DIANE GILEWICZ

+ JACK'S COMEBACK



Health Park

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I am so proud to be the director of the WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital. We have a beautiful and expansive facility that includes 103 inpatient rehabilitation beds serving children, adolescents and adults across four units at WakeMed Raleigh Campus. We are Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accredited in Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation, and we have earned specialty CARF accreditation in Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke and Amputation. In both 2021 and 2022, WakeMed Rehab received national accolades from U.S. News & World Report and Newsweek as one of the highest rated inpatient rehabilitation facilities in the nation.

While we are a robust and thriving program in 2022, we didn't get here overnight. We opened our doors with just 13 beds in 1989. Over time,



we have expanded our bed count from 13 to 103, our total staff from less than 30 to more than 350, and our square footage from 36,279 to 116,171. This growth required vision, planning, commitment and incremental stretch goals to make us one of the top-ranked rehabilitation hospitals in the nation today.

Please enjoy this edition of reConnections where we look back at where we have been and look forward expectantly to where we go from here.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Villena".

BETH VILLENA, MHA, LCSW, CCM
DIRECTOR, REHAB HOSPITAL

reConnections

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A publication of WakeMed Health & Hospitals.

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Supporting WakeMed Rehab

The WakeMed Foundation welcomes contributions to benefit the programs and services of WakeMed Rehab. To learn how you can support WakeMed Rehab, please visit the WakeMed Foundation at www.wakemedfoundation.org or call 919-350-7656.

WAKEMED REHABILITATION LOCATIONS

We offer convenient access to hospital-based and independent practices to meet patients' needs.

INPATIENT

WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital
3000 New Bern Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27610
919-350-7876

OUTPATIENT

Please call 919-350-7000 for WakeMed Outpatient Rehab locations.

WakeMed Outpatient Rehab – Raleigh
3000 New Bern Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27610

WakeMed Outpatient Rehab – Raleigh Medical Park
23 Sunnybrook Road, Ste. 300
Raleigh, NC 27610

WakeMed Physical Therapy – Wake Forest Road
3701 Wake Forest Road, Ste. 120
Raleigh, NC 27609

WakeMed Physical Therapy – Oberlin
505 Oberlin Road, Ste. 140
Raleigh, NC 27605

WakeMed Physical Therapy – Cambridge Village - Brier Creek
7901 TW Alexander Drive, Ste. 500
Raleigh, NC 27617

WakeMed Outpatient Rehab – Durant Road
10880 Durant Road, Ste. 302
Raleigh, NC 27614

WakeMed Outpatient Rehab – Cary
110 Kildaire Park Drive, Ste. 201
Cary, NC 27518

WakeMed Physical Therapy – Cary
110 Kildaire Park Drive, Ste. 208
Cary, NC 27518

WakeMed Outpatient Neuro Rehab – Cary
110 Kildaire Park Drive, Ste. 401
Cary, NC 27518

WakeMed Outpatient Specialty Rehab – Cary Hospital
1900 Kildaire Farm Road
Cary, NC 27518

WakeMed Physical Therapy – Pelvic Health
210 Ashville Avenue
Cary, NC 27518

WakeMed Physical Therapy – Cambridge Village - Apex
10000 Cambridge Village Loop
Apex, NC 27502

WakeMed Outpatient Rehab – Clayton
104 Medspring Drive, Ste. 210
Clayton, NC 27520

CARDIAC REHAB

WakeMed Raleigh Campus and Kildaire Park Drive outpatient rehab locations

PULMONARY REHAB & COVID-19 RECOVERY

WakeMed Raleigh Campus outpatient rehab location

HEALTHWORKS FITNESS & WELLNESS

WakeMed Raleigh Campus and Kildaire Park Drive locations

OUTPATIENT WOUND CARE

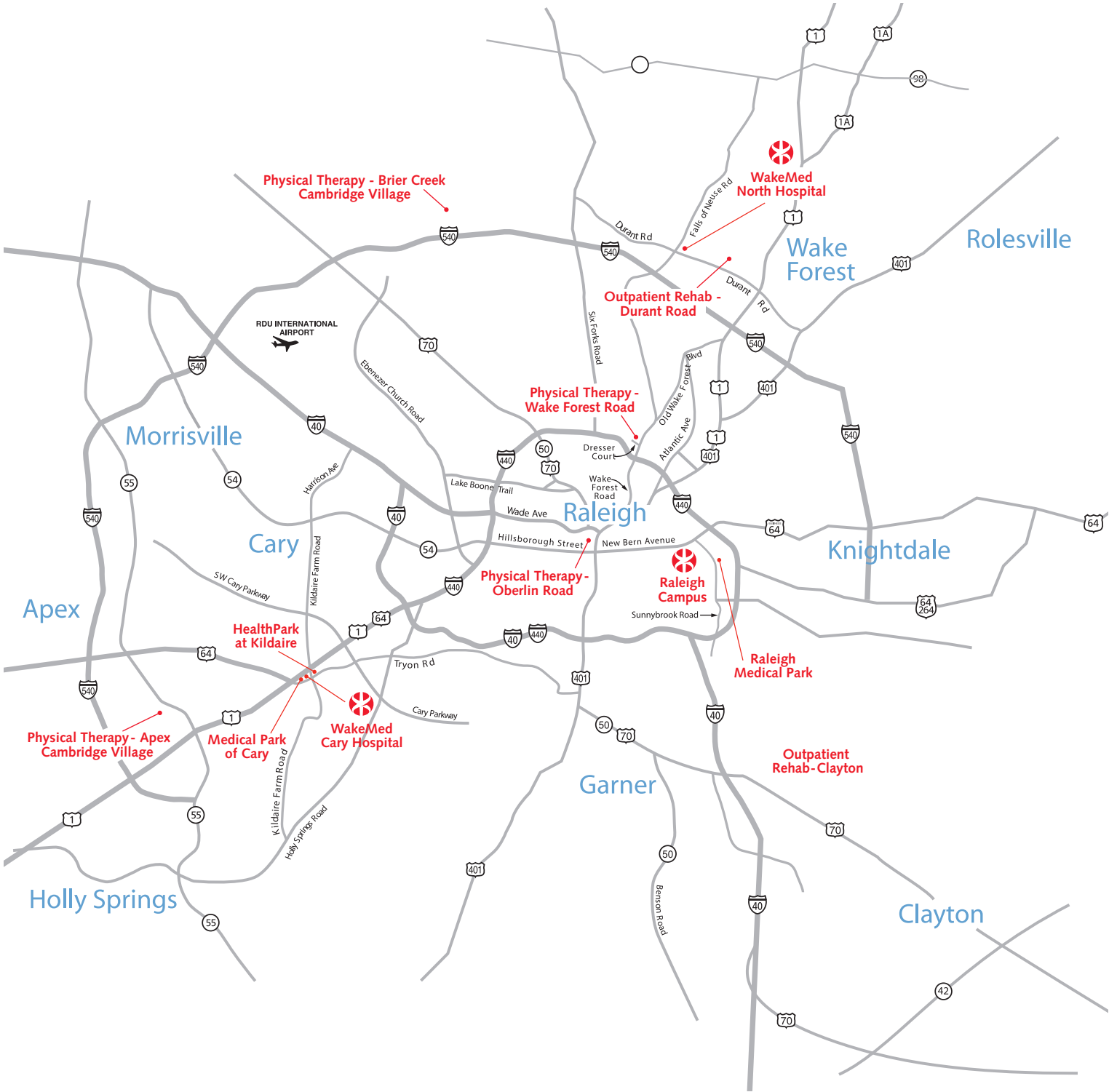
Please call 919-350-4515 for WakeMed Wound Care locations.

WakeMed Wound Care – Raleigh
3000 New Bern Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27610

WakeMed Wound Care – Cary
210 Ashville Avenue, Ste. 420
Cary, NC 27518

HOME HEALTH

WakeMed Home Health
2920 Highwoods Boulevard
Raleigh, NC 27604
919-350-7990



Clayton, Raleigh Campus, Wake Forest Road, North Hospital and Raleigh Medical Park locations operate under the license of WakeMed Raleigh Campus. WakeMed Outpatient Specialty Rehab, WakeMed Outpatient Rehab – Cary and WakeMed Outpatient Neuro Rehab – Cary operate under the license of WakeMed Cary Hospital. The WakeMed Physical Therapy practices operate as independent practices.

Six Decades of Growth

Providing advanced, comprehensive critical care services to promote the best possible patient outcomes has been a part of WakeMed's mission since its establishment. For more than 60 years, WakeMed Rehabilitation has and continues to play an important role helping the health system fulfill its mission each day. The events, moments, and historical firsts are too numerous to capture in this medium, so here is a snapshot of our story.

1990

WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital officially opens becoming Wake County's first comprehensive physical rehabilitation hospital.

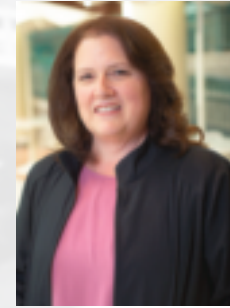


1993

WakeMed Rehab receives its first CARF accreditation.

1995

WakeMed Home Care, now Home Health, is established offering therapeutic services for homebound patients.



1999

WakeMed Rehab receives CARF Spinal Cord Injury Specialty Program accreditation.

See story on pg. 9

2001

WakeMed Rehab becomes one of the nation's premier physical rehabilitation centers with the opening of the Health Park.

1989

WakeMed's rehabilitation unit opens with 13-beds at Raleigh Campus.



1961

WakeMed Raleigh Campus, formerly The Memorial Hospital of Wake County, opens for business. Physical and occupational therapy services are available from inception.

1998

The WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital expands to 68 beds.

1996

WakeMed Neuro Care Unit & Program are established.

Outpatient physical rehab centers open in Cary and North Raleigh.

WakeMed Rehab receives CARF Brain Injury Specialty Program accreditation.

See story on pg. 6



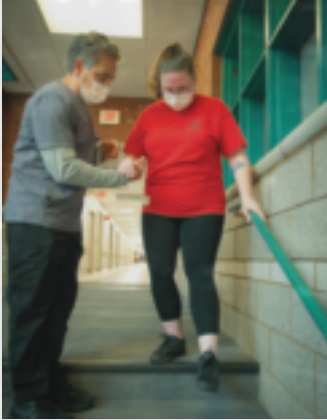
2004

WakeMed Rehab opens Club REACH to strengthen its support to people living with disabilities.

2005

WakeMed and the YMCA of the Greater Triangle form a health care partnership.

WakeMed Outpatient Rehab services are offered at several area YMCAs.



2008

WakeMed Rehab receives CARF Stroke Rehabilitation Specialty Program accreditation.

See story on pg. 11

WakeMed Wound Care is established for the treatment of chronic wounds.

WakeMed Rehab creates the Pet Assisted Therapy (PAT) program with support from the WakeMed Foundation.

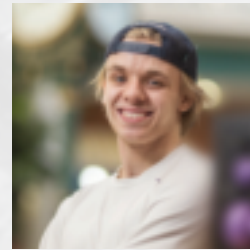


2019

WakeMed Rehab introduces StepForward Prosthesis Training Program.

2018

WakeMed Rehab offers Pulmonary Rehab & Cardiopulmonary Therapy.



2020

The WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital expands to its current 103-bed capacity and establishes its **Children's Rehabilitation Program** within WakeMed's Children's Hospital.

See story on pg. 16

WakeMed Rehab invests in InMotion® ARM technology for home use with support from the WakeMed Foundation.

2022

WakeMed named a Best Hospital for Rehabilitation by U.S. News & World Report.

2009

The WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital expands to 84-bed capacity.

2012

WakeMed introduces Robotic Walking Program and invests in Ekso Robotic Exoskeleton with support from the WakeMed Foundation.

2013

The WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital expands to 98-bed capacity.

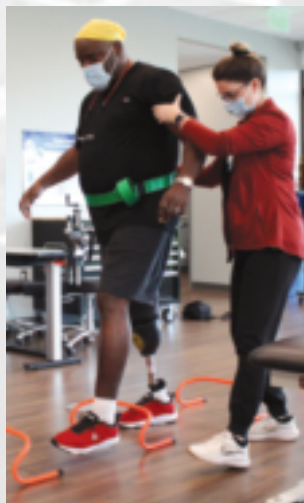
WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital adds Spinal Cord Injury Unit.

WakeMed Rehab invests in Vector Gait & Safety Systems and FES Cycle technology to promote mobility in patients.

2017

WakeMed Rehab receives CARF Amputee Specialty Program accreditation.

See story on pg. 14



2021

WakeMed Rehab expanded outpatient rehab services for neuro patients.

WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital earns top honors from Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report.

WakeMed Cardiac Rehab at Cary Hospital honored with a 5-Star Award from Professional Research Consultants (PRC).

WakeMed, Duke Health and Lifepoint Rehabilitation announce joint venture to open an inpatient rehabilitation hospital in western Wake County.





PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

Director of WakeMed Neuropsychology Laurie Leach, PhD, ABN, explains what's next for the program in 2023

WakeMed is home to one of Wake County's most accomplished brain and spine health centers as well as comprehensive rehabilitation programs. Housed within the rehab division is WakeMed's neuropsychology program. But what exactly is neuropsychology?

Neuropsychology is the study of brain and behavior relationships. Using a series of tests, neuropsychologists look at different areas of the brain that handle problem solving, language skills, visual skills, memory and more – anything the brain does. Results from these tests and clinical evaluations of emotions and behavior assist with accurate diagnosis and lead to specific treatment recommendations for the patient and their family.

For more than 30 years, WakeMed's neuropsychology program has worked with pediatric, adult and geriatric patients and their families affected by brain and central nervous system disorders, injuries and diseases. The neuropsychology team at WakeMed has a wealth of expertise applying their understanding of brain-behavior relationships and development to help patients think, function and learn.

"For patients with brain injury, we are a unique program," says Laurie Leach, PhD, ABN, director of neuropsychology at WakeMed. "We begin working with patients early in their journey, often in the ICU, and follow them throughout their recovery to better understand how their thinking, behavior or emotions may have changed due to the brain injury. This early intervention allows us to

provide comprehensive brain injury education to patients and their families to help set up positive and realistic recovery expectations.”

The neuropsychology program also plays an active role within WakeMed’s Rehabilitation Hospital, supporting the hospital’s CARF accredited specialty programs and serving on the program committees for stroke, spinal cord injury and brain injury. For patients across the continuum of care, especially those who have sustained a stroke or brain injury, the neuropsychologists work in tandem with the case managers, physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists to optimize recovery. The neuropsychology department also has a rehab psychologist who works with patients who may experience emotional struggles with recovery after their injury.

*"We believe in treating the
'whole patient' by addressing
not only the cognitive symptoms
of the person's illness, but also
their emotional, educational
and social needs."*

— Dr. Laurie Leach

Outpatient neuropsychological evaluations are also available for patients seeking additional assessment to reassess cognition to return to work and school after a hospitalization; for the geriatric community to further understand if memory loss is due to normal aging versus mild cognitive impairment or dementia; and for pediatric and adult patients with a variety of medical diagnoses that may lead to changes or concerns about thinking skills.

“We believe in treating the ‘whole patient’ by addressing not only the cognitive symptoms of the person’s illness, but also their emotional, educational and social needs,” continues Dr. Leach.

Today, WakeMed’s neuropsychology program is one of the largest and most comprehensive programs in the Triangle. While the program originally began as a three-person team providing services primarily within the Rehab Hospital, it has grown to nine team members with support staff and services available throughout the continuum of care for both inpatients and outpatients.

As the program continues to move forward, WakeMed is exploring broader and more comprehensive services for persons with epilepsy and brain tumors, with neuropsychological assessment playing a critical role for both pre-and post-surgical evaluations.



SUPPORT GROUPS

WakeMed Amputee Support Group

Third Wednesday of each month

4 to 5:30 pm

WakeMed Conference Dining – Raleigh Campus

For information or to join the meeting virtually, call **919-350-8903** or email Beth Soto at bsoto@wakemed.org.

WakeMed Spinal Cord Injury Support Group

First Wednesday of each month

Noon to 1 pm

WakeMed Conference Dining – Raleigh Campus

For information or to join the meeting virtually, call **919-350-8789** or email Maria Rivera at marivera@wakemed.org.

WakeMed Stroke Support Group

Second Tuesday of each month

Noon to 1 pm

WakeMed Health Park Classroom – Raleigh Campus

For information or to join the meeting virtually, call **919-350-8113** or email Jaycie Frye at jayfrye@wakemed.org.

Cary Brain Injury Support Group

Second Thursday of each month

6 to 7:30 pm

Conference Center - WakeMed Cary Hospital

For information, call **919-618-3003** or email Susan Fewell at susan.fewell@bianc.net.

Triangle Brain Injury Support Group

Meets virtually. For more information, call **919-618-3003** or email Susan Fewell at susan.fewell@bianc.net.

Cary Stroke Support Group

Meets virtually. For more information, call **919-244-6221**.



WishMed
Diane Gilewicz RN
RN

MEET DIANE GILEWICZ

MSN, RN, CRRN

Director of WakeMed's Spinal Cord Injury Program

New York native, wife and mother of two, Diane Gilewicz has been a part of WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital for more than 30 years. She began her career working on a medical surgical unit as a registered nurse before finding her passion for care and caring within the Rehab Hospital. From clinical nurse to nursing supervisor/educator to rehab nursing manager to director of rehab nursing services, Diane was led to rehab nursing early in her career.

"I consider myself blessed to have found my niche in nursing so early in my career. It was easy for me to see how the things I did and said as a rehab nurse could positively impact a patient's life," says Diane.

"When patients come to rehab, regardless of their diagnosis, they have suffered an event that will forever change their lives. The role we have as their rehab nurse is instrumental in preparing them for this new life," she continues.

Complementing her role as director of rehab nursing services, Diane is also the director of the Rehabilitation Hospital's Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Specialty Program which is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Because WakeMed is home to one of North Carolina's six Level 1 Trauma Centers, the WakeMed spinal cord injury team offers a level of comprehensive care unmatched by other facilities.

"At WakeMed, we recognize that a spinal cord injury is life-changing but not life-ending. We pride ourselves in helping our patients achieve their optimal independence and open new doors for them," says Diane.

It's that focus that has motivated Diane to grow the Spinal Cord Injury Specialty Program. Over the years, the program has increased in volume and expertise. "When we first opened in 1989, patients from all of the various diagnostic groups were combined on one small unit. With increases in volume over time, we were able to develop a designated SCI team which later expanded

to two teams. Then in 2013, we had the opportunity to expand once again allowing us to designate a unit for SCI specialty care," she says.

As a specialty unit in the Rehab Hospital, the program offers adult, children and adolescent patients a private gym space, access to advanced rehab technology and specialized equipment, and private rooms as well as support groups, peer-to-peer programs and outpatient rehab programs. As the years have gone by, the program has had to adjust and work more efficiently as lengths of stays have decreased. This has been accomplished by creating a strong team that understands the benefits of reintegrating into the community as quickly as possible and works to engage patients and families early in their stay.

"I enjoy forming relationships with our patients and watching them improve over time," says Diane. "I truly believe there is no more rewarding place to work than rehab and am amazed at how much the program has grown over the years. I feel honored to be a small part of such an incredible team."

"At WakeMed, we recognize that a spinal cord injury is life-changing but not life-ending. We pride ourselves in helping our patients achieve their optimal independence and open new doors for them."

— Diane Gilewicz



Physical therapist Nunzio Vulpis assists Danielle in achieving a major milestone - descending a flight of stairs.



Mistaken for an Ear Infection

United States Air Force EMT Danielle Lance's stroke story

After more than a decade of serving as an EMT for the United States Air Force, Danielle Lance decided it was time to take her career to the next level. She completed paramedic training in 2020 and achieved full paramedic status in May 2021.

Six months into her newly-minted career, Danielle — a 34-year-old wife and mother of four children — began experiencing the health crisis of her life. Over the course of a

month, she suffered an ongoing and debilitating double ear infection. No medications helped and eventually it became too much to bear.

The Ear Infection that Wouldn't Go Away

On Saturday, January 29, 2022, Danielle was lying in bed fast asleep after working a 24-hour shift.

“My husband and then two-year-old came to wake me. When I awoke, I sat up and was talking to them, but I got very dizzy. I stayed dizzy all

day,” Danielle recalls.

Within hours, Danielle's right side started tingling. She began having trouble walking and still felt dizzy, so she and her husband headed to a nearby emergency department. The care team took her to imaging for an MRI and diagnosed Danielle with an ear infection and a cold. She was sent home.

The following morning Danielle couldn't move her right side, and they headed to WakeMed.

An Accurate Diagnosis and Comprehensive Treatment

When the couple arrived to WakeMed Raleigh Campus Emergency Department, Danielle was weak, dizzy, unable to move her right side and had trouble speaking.

Shortly after her arrival, the WakeMed triage nurse recognized Danielle's symptoms as a possible stroke, a Code Stroke was activated and the Stroke Program moved into action. Danielle was diagnosed with an ischemic stroke, a complete basilar artery occlusion, and was scheduled for emergency surgery to remove the clot.

Danielle was in the Neuro Intensive Care Unit (Neuro ICU) for three days following the procedure before being transferred to the 5B Neuro Intermediate Care unit where she received care. During that time, a physical therapist taught Danielle how to use a quad cane as they were not sure if any movement would return. She was then transferred to the WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital where she received speech, occupational, physical and recreational therapy for six weeks.

"Occupational therapy helped me with my arm and hand. Physical therapy helped me start driving and running again."

— Danielle Lance

"The rehab team members were all amazing. Thank you Nunzio, Kelly, Courtney and Portia," she says.

On her last day, Danielle was thrilled to go home. She was gifted a "My Independence Day" shirt from her WakeMed Rehab care team and was able to leave with light touch assistance and no assistive equipment.

"It was very emotional leaving all the professional help behind and doing everything on my own," she says.

Finding Her New Normal

Danielle continued with outpatient occupational and physical therapy

after she left the hospital. She graduated from speech therapy which helped prepare her to return to work.

"In May 2022, I graduated from occupational and physical therapy. Occupational therapy helped me with my arm and hand. Physical therapy helped me start driving and running again — although very carefully," she recalls.

Danielle was supposed to return to work in August 2022, but she did so well in therapy that she received authorization to return in July 2022.







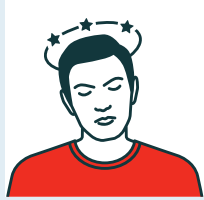
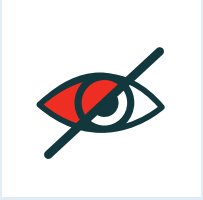

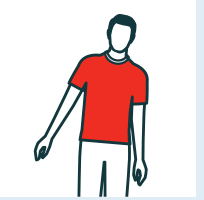

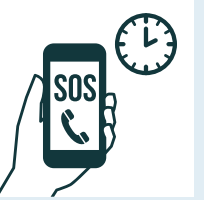
Today, Danielle admits that she still doesn't feel quite like herself after having a stroke, but she feels that her post-stroke self is her new normal.

"My limitations are that my speech isn't as good as it was before. My right arm is still weak, so I have trouble with carrying or opening things. I still have some trouble with my short-term memory, but it's getting better. I do all the things I did before, just a little slower. I'm walking, talking and caring for my kids. Thank goodness for that!" she says.

SPOT A STROKE LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS AND ACT FAST

While stroke is the fifth leading cause of death, few people know the signs. Use the acronym **BE FAST** to remember the signs of stroke, and what to do if someone near you is experiencing them.

WakeMed Raleigh Campus and Cary Hospital are Joint Commission-Certified Primary Stroke Centers. We offer a full continuum of stroke care – from diagnosis in our Emergency Departments, to caring for patients who have had a stroke in the Neurosciences department, WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital and outpatient facilities. Our stroke program is Stroke Specialty Program Certified (CARF-SSP).

					
					
BALANCE LOSS OF BALANCE, HEADACHE OR DIZZINESS	EYES BLURRED VISION	FACE ONE SIDE OF THE FACE IS DROOPING	ARMS ARM OR LEG WEAKNESS	SPEECH SPEECH DIFFICULTY	TIME CALL AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY

WakeMed

StepForward

PROSTHESIS TRAINING PROGRAM



Once you've recovered from your surgery and have your prosthetic device, it's time to start thinking about relearning how to do the things you enjoy with your new prosthetic limb.

WakeMed StepForward is a comprehensive, structured program that helps people:

- Safely, confidently and consistently use their new limb
- Use their prosthesis to their fullest potential
- Care for themselves and their prosthesis
- Troubleshoot issues and identify who to call for assistance

There are three ways to participate in WakeMed StepForward:

Inpatient – as an admitted patient at WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital

Outpatient – at one of WakeMed Rehabilitation's participating outpatient practices in Wake County and Clayton

WakeMed Home Health – in your home

Please note not all patients qualify for inpatient StepForward. An evaluation with a WakeMed physical therapist and occupational therapist as well as an insurance plan review will help WakeMed Rehab determine which setting is most appropriate.

Ready to Take A Step Forward? Call WakeMed Rehabilitation at 919-350-7876.

A physician referral is needed for your evaluation. Referrals can be entered in Epic, called in or faxed to 919-350-8791.

I Like Your Robot Leg

James Brown finds his footing with WakeMed's StepForward Program



Fuquay Varina resident James Brown chuckles when he thinks of his newly-minted celebrity status among kids. "Wherever I go, I find kids staring at my prosthetic leg. One day, I was walking through my neighborhood, and a little boy stopped on his tricycle to say, 'I like your robot leg.'"

Despite the hardships that James has endured, the simple kindness in these passing glances and innocent words have offered him some comfort and reminded him of his glory days as a body builder, United States Air Force Airman and athlete.

An Uphill Health Battle

Around 2014 and for the next six years, James and his wife, Romanda, began to see a decline in their overall health. James went into kidney failure as a result of diabetes and had to go on dialysis.

Simultaneously, his wife began to suffer a series of strokes that, with each one, took more and more of her faculties. Together, they did their best to care for each

other, and in 2019 James received a kidney transplant. Though he began to have more energy, a diabetic infection brought his activities to a halt.

"I already had neuropathy in my feet from diabetes. One day, I looked down at my foot, and my toe looked like a cobra head. I'd hit it on something, but I didn't feel it. I went to the foot doctor and found out it was infected," he says.

James was diagnosed with a necrotizing infection which spread to his toes and ultimately under his foot. "I had a choice of losing my foot and leg slowly as infection spread, also risking my life, or I could amputate below the knee and be back up and walking within a few months. I needed to care for my wife, so I decided on amputation," says James.

During James' appointment to schedule his amputation, he received a call from his wife's nurse letting him know his wife had passed. A week later, James had his leg amputated.



"They helped me tremendously with balance and strength because I had to learn to use different muscles to compensate for my lost ankle and calf."

— James Brown

James' Limb Removal Surgery

Prior to the amputation, the infection spread and began to cause searing pain. "I was in pain when I'd try to walk, but immediately after the amputation, I felt better. Strange as it sounds, the amputation also helped me to deal with my grief. I was able to concentrate on getting through the rehab process, so I could walk again," James recalls.

The WakeMed Rehabilitation occupational and physical therapy teams wasted no time in helping James refocus his attention and regain his mobility. He began rehab immediately after the amputation to learn how to maneuver in his wheelchair. Once he left the hospital, WakeMed Home Health rehab teams visited him to continue therapy in his home.

WakeMed StepForward Program

In the summer of 2021, James was fitted for his prosthesis and invited to attend the WakeMed StepForward program at the Raleigh Campus Rehabilitation Hospital.

"I received physical, occupational and some recreational therapy during the StepForward program. They helped me tremendously with balance and strength because I had to learn to use different muscles to compensate for my lost ankle and calf," he says.

"I did whatever I could to harass the therapists," James laughs. "On the last day, they gave me a shirt that said 'It's My Independence Day,' and I turned it over, got a black magic marker and wrote 'I survived boot camp with Karen the Impaler.'"

James did well in the StepForward Program and after only two and a half weeks of therapeutic sessions, he was ready to take on the world.

James Steps Back into His Life

Proud of what he'd accomplished, he drove from Fuquay Varina, NC, to New Castle, Penn., to see his high school buddies for their 40th anniversary basketball championship celebration. Upon his return, he resumed therapy at WakeMed Outpatient Rehab at the Health Park at Kildaire. This therapy gave him a chance to continue improving his balance and increasing his leg strength. And in April 2022, James completed outpatient rehab.

For more information about WakeMed's Amputee Program or StepForward Program, call 919-350-7876.





Jack's Comeback Story

Jack Montgomery's healing journey at WakeMed Children's Rehab Hospital

Twice a week, Jack Montgomery drives himself to WakeMed for outpatient therapy. He's proud of that because not that long ago, there was a lot of uncertainty about his future mobility and independence after a frightening car accident in June 2021 left him with a spinal cord injury, concussion and broken clavicle.

It was graduation practice day at Garner Magnet High School, and Jack grabbed a ride with one of his track teammates. With excitement about the future, the countdown was on and everything seemed to be going their way. Then in a matter of seconds, a collision left them both injured inside a car that was engulfed in flames. Jack and his friend were both rushed by ambulance to the Trauma Center at Raleigh Campus.

Right from the Start

Jack was initially met and cared for by WakeMed's Trauma team. "When we arrived at WakeMed, we really didn't know what to expect," says Jack's mother Sandy Montgomery. "But we could see he was already getting very good care right from the start."

According to his mother, Jack was confused and talking about hip pain, and they could tell there were some real concerns. "We could see that they were checking to see if

he had any feeling or movement in different areas of his body," says Sandy. "He had a CT and MRI, and his neurosurgeon let us know Jack's L3 vertebrae was broken."

Jack couldn't move one of his feet, and he had no feeling below the knee on his left leg. "We were told they could not rule out paralysis," says Sandy. "Surgery was scheduled for the next day with the expectation that they would most likely need to put a cage in place of the vertebrae."

Long Hard Days

On surgery day, Jack's parents wondered about the days ahead. Would he walk again and what about his college plans? "While there was no certainty, his surgeon told us he thought Jack would one day walk into his office, and the pediatric Rehab team prepared us for all the possibilities, but I don't think anyone thought he would walk like he is now," says Sandy. "We were also told not to rule out college, so we kept a positive outlook and took things one day at a time."

Those first few weeks were really tough as Jack's parents saw him struggle with doing things independently while healing from surgical procedures on his spine and clavicle.

"We were probably a little naïve about the hurdles to come after his surgeries," says his father Tim Montgomery.

A Familiar Place & Friendly Faces

Following Jack's initial recovery from surgery, he was admitted to WakeMed Children's Rehabilitation Hospital. Coincidentally, Jack was placed in the same room he had been in a few years prior following a procedure. The difference this time? The room had been converted. Pediatric rehab services had been expanded into a dedicated children's rehabilitation hospital.

Sandy chuckles, "What are the chances? It was like another little reassurance — a sign that we were right where we were supposed to be."

Jack agrees. "Despite everything, it was a familiar and comfortable place for me to be because of how nice everyone was there."

He tells people he feels like he got the most out of his time at WakeMed because of the people he was surrounded by. "You can tell they actually care, and they become your friends," says Jack. "They will be there for you in every way you need, and it's not just because it's their job." The whole family has a strong appreciation for Jack's nurses and therapists.

*"You can tell they actually care,
and they become your friends.
They will be there for you in every
way you need, and it's not just
because it's their job."*

— Jack Montgomery

Therapy Plus Positivity

A big part of Jack's success story is Jack himself and the trust he put in his care team at WakeMed Children's Rehabilitation Hospital.

"As I learned more, I began to understand that I would benefit from doing the most I could, as soon as I could, because that's where you see most of the progress with nerves — early on," says Jack. "I had to fight for how I was going to live the rest of my life." He decided that if he could possibly do more — to walk, run or jump one day, then he was going to do what was needed and make sacrifices over those months in the hospital. "Let's just do it," Jack said regularly.

That was the positive mindset he adopted early on with the confidence that his physical and occupational therapists would not let him keep doing something that would hurt him. His father was reassured to see how committed his

care team was to finding ways to make sure Jack could do the therapy he needed in safe, adaptive ways.

"The therapists were all working just as hard as Jack was," says Tim.

The child life specialists also focused on keeping Jack in a positive mindset, and his parents say they got extra creative with therapeutic recreation — everything from ping pong to Pokémon and Olympic-themed challenges. Real relationships were developed through fun and engaging activities that helped build morale and kept Jack moving forward both mentally and physically.



JOKING AROUND WITH JOE

Laughter and companionship play an important role in the healing process. So Jack's parents were extra grateful when he met Joe Jourdain, clinical aide for the Rehab gym, and a relationship rooted in lighthearted jokes started to form. At a time when Jack could've easily gotten frustrated or anxious about new challenges, he really started to look forward to the gym time — almost as much as he looked forward to having a few good laughs with Joe.

"The first time I used the Exoskeleton, which is a little like an Ironman outfit, I passed out at the end, and I was apparently much calmer than expected after that happened," says Jack. "Joe got a kick out of how chill I was, and we just started to have fun joking around every time we saw each other." That companionship made Jack's exercise time less daunting and more enjoyable. "It made me want to go to the gym and try new things."

For Jack, supportive relationships were the best kind of medicine.

"The people at WakeMed made my situation the best it could be," he says. "No matter what my level of success was for the day, I knew my people were in my corner rooting for me and would help make me better — they were there to help me out!"



Jessica Vance, PT, and Jack share a high five to celebrate reaching a rehab milestone.

Top Technology

“The technology and equipment WakeMed has is so impressive,” says Tim. “Jack couldn’t use his right arm for a long time, but the team wanted to get him on his feet, and they were able to use the Vector to take the weight for Jack so he could focus on his legs.”

Knowing he would have ongoing access to the innovative equipment and expert team at WakeMed eased the family’s mind when it was time for Jack to start thinking about going home.

Bittersweet Transitions

When it was time for Jack to transition out of inpatient care, the whole family was a little hesitant about how that would all work out. Jack was going to be in a wheelchair, and he wasn’t sure how well his progress would continue with so many changes all at once.

“Going home was bittersweet because I was leaving my team, and I was going to miss them,” says Jack. “It turns out I didn’t need to worry at all because my therapists Mary (OT), Kelsey (PT) and Jessica (PT) were all so good at what they do, and one of them was always there for me through each new stage.”

His therapists even came to their house prior to his discharge to help put together a plan to help Jack find independence at home. Once Jack was back home, he continued to make great progress with access to all that WakeMed Rehab has via outpatient therapy. Jack says his physical and occupational therapists helped him keep thinking about the possibilities by asking about goals and helping him map out a plan that worked for him — a plan that they helped him through step by step.

Game Changing Moments

Jack and his family liked to say, “Let’s make today a good day.” While they talked about the big picture at times, they really adopted that mantra and stuck to focusing on what was needed in the moment. And it really seemed to work!

“As he got stronger, Jack progressed to using a walker and then a rollator at home,” says Sandy. “We weren’t sure of how much walking ability he would truly regain, but it wasn’t long before he was ready to try walking with a cane!”

Jack and his parents both say that a real game changer for him was getting custom braces. He wore ankle foot orthotics that he also needed to sleep in. Over time, some repairs were needed, and the team decided Jack would really benefit from custom braces.

“Jessica came with us to meet with an orthotics team and helped ask all the right questions,” says Sandy. “Once he had those new braces, things seemed to change overnight!”

“On December 6, just three days after getting his braces, Jack stood up, balanced himself and walked between the parallel bars,” says Sandy. “What a moment!”

Step by step he’s making a comeback, and his path forward is promising.



For more information about WakeMed Children's Rehabilitation Hospital, call 919-350-7876 or scan the QR code.

"My family was really there for me, and that combined with the WakeMed team made all the difference for me."

— Jack Montgomery



Strategic Direction for 2022



With the COVID-19 health crisis continuing into its second full year, the WakeMed Rehabilitation team initiated strategic planning for fiscal year 2022 with an overarching priority of ensuring patients in need of rehabilitation services continued to receive the high-quality care they've come to know and expect from WakeMed. Although COVID-19 surges were expected to continue, the Rehab Hospital leadership team persevered, shifting mentality from surviving to moving programs forward with a renewed focus.

Data from 2021 indicated that patients were struggling to reengage in meaningful activities in the months following discharge from the Rehab Hospital. Certainly, the pandemic contributed to this for some, but for others, the reasons were less clear. With this in mind, the leadership team identified patient reengagement as a top priority in 2022.

Because Rehab Hospital team members have limited contact with patients once they discharge, we focused on maximizing our time with patients during therapy; we provided education, increased patient awareness on the risk of isolation and crafted personalized plans that

would identify strategies for patients to employ after returning to the community. The Therapeutic Recreation team took the lead in this and developed a quality-of-life inventory for patients to complete prior to discharge. This survey assisted patients in identifying their meaningful activities and the steps necessary to achieve them. Once recognized, we worked one-on-one with patients to develop a plan of action, keeping their sight and ours on the goal – moving the patient closer to full engagement in the things that matter most.

While there are many barriers that make reintegration into meaningful activities challenging for patients, we worked individually with each patient to identify those hurdles prior to discharge. Goals that may have seemed insurmountable like playing golf, babysitting for a grandchild or attending church were broken down into manageable parts where successes could be built along the way. Small steps are motivating and offer encouragement for patients to keep moving forward.





WAKEMED REHABILITATION

INPATIENT & OUTPATIENT DATA

The entire WakeMed Rehab team thanks the providers, patients and families who support our efforts to provide high-quality care and service across our care continuum. The following data is derived from admission and discharge information from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.

REHABILITATION HOSPITAL

Admission Diagnosis

Cerebrovascular Accident (Stroke)	26%
Orthopaedic	12%
Spinal Cord Injury	9%
Brain Injury	11%
Debility	13%
Multiple Trauma	11%
Amputee	5%

Our Patients with Stroke

Total Number	428
Average Age	67
Average Length of Stay	19 days

Our Patients with Orthopaedic Conditions

Total Number	198
Average Age	62
Average Length of Stay	15 days

Our Patients with Spinal Cord Injury

Total Number	153
Average Age	58
Average Length of Stay	23 days

Our Patients with Brain Injury

Total Number	175
Average Age	59
Average Length of Stay	17 days

Our Patients with Multiple Trauma

Total Number	177
Average Age	50
Average Length of Stay	18 days

Our Patients with Amputations

Total Number	81
Average Age	62
Average Length of Stay	16 days

Pediatric Patients (ages 4-17)

Total Number	38
Average Age	13
Average Length of Stay	18 days

OUTPATIENT DAY TREATMENT

Day Treatment

Total Day Treatment Number	160
Total Visits	9,642
Overall Patient Satisfaction	98%

Admission Diagnosis

Cerebrovascular Accident (Stroke)	52%
Brain Injury	29%
Spinal Cord Injury	17%
Other Neuro Conditions	2%
Multiple Trauma	0.06%

Our Patients with Stroke

Total Number	83
Average Age	60
Average Length of Service	116 days

Our Patients with Spinal Cord Injury

Total Number	27
Average Age	35
Average Length of Service	151 days

Our Patients with Brain Injury

Total Number	46
Average Age	38
Average Length of Service	100 days

Pediatric Rehab Patients (ages 4-17)

Total Number	9
Average Age	14
Average Length of Service	115 days

**To Make a Referral
to WakeMed Rehab**

Inpatient: 919-350-7876

Outpatient: 919-350-7000

COMING SOON

New Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital Joint Venture in Wake County

WakeMed, Duke Health and Lifepoint Rehabilitation are creating a joint venture to construct and operate a 52-bed inpatient rehabilitation hospital in western Wake County.

The 62,000 square-foot freestanding hospital will feature private rooms and private bathrooms, with designated wings for adult patients with orthopaedic issues, stroke and other neurological conditions. The main therapy suite will be located on the first floor complete with a therapy gym, rooms for multiple therapy protocols, private therapy rooms, a cooking therapy room and an “Activities of Daily Living” therapy suite. Additional therapy rooms will be located on the second floor for convenient access for the entire patient population.

For years, Duke and WakeMed rehabilitation physicians, leaders, nurses and therapists have worked together in different capacities to help adults and children recover and rejoin the community after serious illness or injury. They have long discussed ways to work together to expand access to high-quality inpatient rehab care in cost-effective ways

and look forward to working with Lifepoint Rehabilitation to deliver on the vision for the new hospital.

Lifepoint Rehabilitation will manage the day-to-day operations of the new hospital. A board of managers with representatives from all three entities will provide oversight.

The facility is expected to open in 2024.

