

HOMESTEAD HOSPITAL SUCCESS STORY



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SITUATION

Homestead Hospital is part of Baptist Health South Florida, the largest faith-based, not-for-profit health care organization in the region. As part of Baptist Health, Homestead Hospital is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of individuals through providing evidence-based, compassionate care. The hospital is known for serving everyone in the community, regardless of their ability to pay for care.

A middle-aged patient with Guillian Barre Syndrome, a condition where the immune system attacks the body's nerves and can result in muscle weakness and paralysis, visited the hospital complaining of a tingling sensation, as well as overall arm and leg weakness. The patient was admitted immediately. Within a few days, the patient's condition degraded to almost complete paralysis in the trunk and extremities.

CHALLENGE

Seeking to treat the patient's paralysis as quickly as possible, the physical therapy staff initiated treatment within the first week of the hospital stay.

In the first few days of physical therapy, the treatment plan consisted of passive and active assisted range of motion exercises, as well as sitting up in bed and dangling feet over the edge. Even when fully supported by staff during these movements, the patient experienced severe dizziness and high anxiety. After the first week of therapy, staff recognized that therapy would be a challenge, but remained dedicated to helping the patient gradually regain control and muscle strength.

After three months of progressive physical therapy, the patient could tolerate 30 minutes of unsupported sitting within a narrow cone of balance, and would then sit for three hours in the bedside chair. However, the patient still experienced severe neuropathic pain in the hands and feet, making standing nearly impossible. Together, physical therapy and nursing staff attempted a fully upright position by using a comprehensive standing and lifting aid that was situated at the patient's back and thighs. While this did allow the patient to maintain minimal weight bearing, the patient's body was in poor alignment and posture. Physical therapists then tried an alternative method with partial standing using a support aid, but it was difficult to implement because it required the treating therapist to lift more than the maximum recommended weight.

SOLUTION

After six months of treatment, staff members began seeking alternative treatment options and discovered the OnCare™ VitalGo Total Lift Bed™, which offers an innovative adjustable patient platform. This platform allows the patient to tilt into any angle or chair position, while remaining fully supported by straps and providing the ability to measure weight bearing ratios.

Initially, the patient's blood pressure would fluctuate as the OnCare VitalGo Total Lift Bed tilted and the patient would become anxious at any degree greater than 60°. However, after four days of gradually increasing both the tilting angle and weight bearing ratios, the patient's blood pressure stabilized, and the patient was able to stand at 82°, fully weight bearing, without any complaints of pain or dizziness.

Recognizing significant progress and improved patient confidence, physical therapy staff took the next step and loosened the lower straps of the OnCare VitalGo Total Lift Bed, allowing the patient to perform mini squats and move his arms while standing on the patient platform.

Continuing on the path to recovery, the patient was able to stand for a full 1.5 hours while independently completing physical therapy exercises with little to no nursing supervision.

"The improvement we experienced in the last month of standing on the VitalGo Total Lift Bed is equal to, or greater than, what we saw in the last five months of very time-consuming, aggressive physical therapy. This bed will accelerate the recovery of our patients and allow them to experience therapeutic intervention, even when the therapist cannot literally be there! It is not only easy to use, but extremely stable and safe for nursing and physical therapy personnel."

*Suzanne Lopez, MSPT
Homestead Hospital*

RESULTS

The patient has experienced the following clinical improvements:

- Accelerated mobility
- Stabilized blood pressure
- Improved blood flow, identified through the color and skin turgor
- Minimized anxiety during movement
- Increased endurance during physical activity
- Reduced edema in hands and arms
- Improved core temperature after standing
- Renewed patient hope and confidence for recovery