Major Rehab Expansion in the Works

A major expansion of Saint Antoine’s Rehabilitation and Transitional Care Services is currently in the works.

Plans include an expansion of our rehabilitation therapy room with an “Easy Street” environment, and redesigning our Transitional Care client rooms.

The “Easy Street” environment simulates a typical city street with all the challenges that clients will encounter in their daily lives upon returning home.

Significantly expanding our rehabilitation space will bring it in line with best practices, accommodate additional modern therapy equipment, and permit us to serve a greater number of people with more complex needs.

Redesigning and refurbishing transitional care unit patient rooms will allow us to provide a lovely, comfortable and “homelike” living environment with modern amenities. A separate entryway and parking area will be added for ease of access.

The cost of the expansion project will be $1.5M. A capital campaign, the Second Century Campaign, has begun with leadership gifts amounting to over $600,000. Groundbreaking for the new facility is scheduled for early May. The public phase of the Second Century Campaign will soon be announced.
April Paniccia has been appointed as the new Director of Social Work for Saint Antoine Residence.

Executive Director, Wendy Fargnoli, made the announcement saying, “April is exactly the right fit for us as we begin our Rehabilitation and Transitional Care expansion.”

April has had more than 15 years experience working with rehabilitation and transitional care clients in both nursing home and hospital settings. In her last job, April was part of a team which helped an East Providence nursing home to expand its transitional care program.

Also, she says, “I remember working at Saint Joseph’s Hospital, many years ago, when they had an “Easy Street” environment as part of their therapy services.”

At the East Providence nursing home, April worked as a Licensed Social Worker doing admissions, marketing, social work, and discharges for the enlarged transitional care program along with her other work as a social worker for long term care residents. She says that “we were very successful with transitional care. We had a 97% residency rate and less than average re-hospitalization.”

April received her MSW from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Certification in Gerontology from the Medical College of Virginia. She is a native of Rhode Island and earned her BSW from Rhode Island College.

April summed up her social worker job duties as “understanding and working with the whole person, e.g., spiritual, psychological, social, and medical. In this way, you help the individual to maintain an active, and independent lifestyle.”

Studies further show that future seniors will live at home, have episodic hospital care, transition in short-term rehabilitative care, and then return home. It certainly is clear that if seniors enter a nursing home, they will do so at a very late age and when their needs are so great that they cannot be treated episodically.

“Safe transitions home,” therefore, forms the basis for our decision to expand our rehabilitation and transitional care services. Then, there is the changing reimbursement rates for nursing homes. There are pilot programs afoot for “bundled” payments, and for acuity-based reimbursements based on the acuity needs of and services provided to the resident. Changing reimbursement systems will challenge all of us to produce quality outcomes, avoid potential re-hospitalizations, and to provide care for clients in the right place and at the right time based upon current needs.

We believe that we are positioned to do just that! Our one-hundred years of experience, of being the largest nursing home in RI, and the first in providing new and effective services for the elderly have given us the undergirding to forge ahead and provide even better care and new modes of treatment for those in transition.

And so, our Second Century of care begins ….

Wendy Fargnoli
Executive Director

Younger Adults in Rehabilitation

As we expand our transitional care services, we will put a new emphasis on treating younger adults. Such is the case with 50-year-old, Michael Sabatino, Chief Financial Officer for the Diocese of Providence, who recently rehabbed at Saint Antoine after double-knee, replacement surgery.

Mike says, “From my arrival, when I was greeted at the entrance with a wheelchair, to placing me in bed with extra blankets (because I was freezing), to my final day with an extra order of pancakes for breakfast, my stay could not have gone better.”

He notes that the nursing and floor staff were always professional and courteous and made sure that he was comfortable and had the proper protocol of medicines. He says, “A smile always greeted me as they entered my room and whenever something was needed, they were there within minutes. They would stop by just to see if I needed anything and on a couple of occasions, they brought me my favorite, coffee ice-cream cup for a snack at night.”

As for the Physical and Occupational Therapy teams, “words can’t express my gratitude to them,” says Mike. “They did their jobs with a sense of mission and diligence, overlaid with compassion for the client, and sprinkled with just the right amount of humor and banter to make the arduous job of rehab that much easier.”

In conclusion, notes Mike, “I have known well of Saint Antoine’s reputation and accomplishments, having been on its Advisory Board for the past 15 years. But to actually ‘live it’ for 10 days made me realize how fortunate we are to have such a facility as this in our Diocese for the people of Rhode Island.”

Second Century of Care Begins

I recently came across an incredibly, fantastic statistic. Did you know that by the year 2030, there will be more people living above age 60 than all other age brackets combined. That certainly is hard to believe. But, the truth of the matter is that people are living longer and healthier, and they want to age in place! In other words, they want stay at home for as long as they can before they have to enter a nursing home.

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Why Rehab Expansion Now?

In planning for our rehabilitation and transitional care expansion project, we made a careful assessment of what is needed for Saint Antoine's long-term residents as well as those from the outside and compared it to our capability to handle those needs, now and into the future.

We found that our rehabilitative services have grown by an average of 12% per year for the last several years. To put it in perspective, in a recent month, our Rehabilitation Department performed 953 services (approximately 45-47 sessions per day) and 262 new evaluations. Services are provided in a 375 sq. foot Therapy room that holds offices and therapy equipment. Simply put, the increased demand for rehabilitation and transitional care for residents and community members is outpacing our capacity.

Additionally, outside community members who have needed short-term transitional care were placed throughout the Residence facility. We recently have transferred all transitional care clients to one unit. We believe that this change will result in better and more expeditious care for our short term residents.

An independent Community Needs Assessment conducted by David Roush and Associates for Saint Antoine showed that seniors are living longer and healthier. For the first time in history, there will be more seniors living above age 65 than all other age brackets combined by the year 2030. By and large, seniors will live at home but will have episodic health crisis, requiring hospitalization, and then transitional care in order to return home again.

Finally, on the financial front, short term transitional care is reimbursed to nursing homes by Medicare at a higher rate than Medicaid, long-term care. It makes prudent financial sense for Saint Antoine to increase its short-term, transitional care clientele and to do so for both the elderly as well as younger adults.

Saint Antoine seeks to expand its Rehabilitative and Transitional Care services in response to the above changing eldercare environment which includes a growing, aging population that wants to stay at home as they age, and a widening reimbursement gap between short and long term care.

When our expansion project is completed, we will be able to serve more people and people of varying ages; expeditiously deliver quality services; address complex needs; avoid costly re-hospitalization; and stabilize our finances.

Easy Street

“Easy Street” is central to Saint Antoine’s Rehabilitation and Transitional Care Expansion Project.

The “Easy Street” concept was first created some 20 years ago at Phoenix Memorial Hospital in Arizona. It has been nationally acclaimed for its innovation, realism, and clinical value. Some 70 “Easy Street” type environments exist, nationwide, but only one in New England at the Spaulding Cambridge Rehabilitation Center. Saint Antoine would be the first nursing home in Rhode Island to use this mode of therapy.

The “Easy Street” environment gives rehabilitative clientele the opportunity to practice everyday skills in a safe, therapeutic environment. It includes modules like a grocery store, bank, car, apartment, and a variety of walking surfaces. By mastering these skills while still in an inpatient setting, patients learn to anticipate and feel more comfortable with situations that they will face when they are ready to return home and reassert their independence.

(Examples of modules in an “Easy Street” Environment from: Northwest Hospital & Medical Center, Seattle, WA; Aurora Health Care, Milwaukee, WI; and Cuyahoga Falls General Hospital, Cuyahoga Falls, OH)

Patients learn once again to use stairs, maneuver up curbs, down ramps, and walk on a variety of surfaces.

A model apartment replicates daily living activities in the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, and other areas of the home.

A fully stocked market provides practice using a cart, reaching, handling various size items, and checking out.

Patients can practice maneuvering in and out of a car and simulate driving motions.
CALLING ALL AUCTION ITEMS

In conjunction with Saint Antoine’s 2014 Golf Tournament fundraiser, we will be hosting an online auction. Currently, we are in the process of obtaining auction items.

Do you own a time-share that you would like to donate? Can you obtain gift certificates to restaurants or admission passes to performance venues. How about some antiques that you would like to unclutter your house with? Do you have a special kind-of service that you could offer such as carpentry, accounting, lawn care, graphic arts? Are you an entertainer? A comedian. A “jack of all” trades.

We are looking for any and all of the above and even more. Our categories include trips, antiques, jewelry, art work, sports tickets, vacation spots. We’d love to acquire a car for the auction. Anyone have a new car that they’d like to donate? Well, you get the idea --- items can range as far as your imagination can take you.

If you would like to donate an auction item, please email rchristensen@stantoine.net. We will get back to you to collect the information we need and to expedite the donation.

Remember: Saint Antoine is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization. Therefore, all donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.