The Cookie Monster

Around Gaylord Hospital, volunteer Curt Fisher is affectionately known as The Cookie Monster. Every Thursday he bakes for the staff and visits patients who now work toward recovery, as he once did. One morning, without warning, Curt awoke and was completely paralyzed. He suspected he might have Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS), a rapidly progressive disorder that inflames nerves, causes muscle weakness, and sometimes leads to paralysis. He spent the first nine days in a coma, breathing through a ventilator that would still be in place when he arrived at Gaylord weeks later. “When I awoke I learned I did have GBS. I remembered I had visited friends at Gaylord over the years, and had always thought of it as an inspiring place to get better,” he says. “So when my doctors began talking about rehab, I asked to come to Gaylord.”

The next four weeks involved intensive physical and occupational therapy on a schedule both rigorous and time-consuming. “The therapists were kind and friendly, but they were also definite about what you had to do to get better,” he recalls. “They wanted me to be all I could be, so they worked with my initially meager abilities and we built from there.”

Who knew that making chocolate chip cookies would become a turning point? How could an activity meant to reinforce eye/hand coordination, give practice in following directions, and engage both fine and gross motor skills take on such importance? “Working with the staff, who are now friends for life, I relearned basic living skills - eating, getting dressed, walking, personal hygiene, etc. But making those cookies was the first concrete thing I accomplished,” he muses. “I knew then that I could do something and that knowledge renewed my hope.”

Gaylord’s expertise made the difference:

◆ Inpatient Medical and Rehab Care
◆ Vent weaning and decanulation
◆ Outpatient Physical Therapy

Curt spent four weeks at Gaylord, followed by four months of outpatient therapy and today one would never know the challenges he has overcome. He finds great satisfaction in sharing his experience with other GBS patients. “I remember how initially confusing it was - the schedule, the exercise, the food, the fear,” he says. “But I can look them in the eye and say, ‘Where you sit, I sat. That machine you’re on, I was on. I try to help them fill in the blanks, and share with them my confidence that Gaylord is a place of great healing.’”

www.gaylord.org
Gaylord Exemplifies Expert

Patients come to Gaylord Hospital from all areas of the Northeast to experience the strength of our interdisciplinary clinical teams and our dedication to positive patient outcomes. Gaylord’s accreditations include:

- The only CARF accredited rehab hospital in CT for inpatient and outpatient care
- Continuous CARF accreditation for 28 years
- Medical team with specialty certified PM&R physiatrists
- Therapists with Neurological Clinical Specialist (NCS) certification
- The only Ekso Bionics in CT

Maintaining these specialty accreditations demonstrates our commitment to providing the ultimate in patient experience and care as a leader in the field of rehabilitation and medical care.

NEURO PATIENT SATISFACTION


LTACH OUTCOMES CMS QUALITY MEASURES

- New or Worsened Pressure Ulcers
  Gaylord .7% vs. National 1.8%
- CLABS
  Gaylord .200 vs. National .935
- Unplanned Readmission Measure for 30 Days Post-Discharge
  Gaylord 23.25% vs. National 24.61%
- CAUTI
  Gaylord .685 vs. National .91

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION EXCEEDS THE BENCHMARK:

Gaylord Hospital staff satisfaction 81% vs. National rate of staff satisfaction of 64%.

DISCHARGE LOCATION BY AGE GROUP

All SCI Graduates Last Five Years

NEURO PROGRAM DAYS

AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY

CLINICAL OUTCOMES

Gaylord is Performing Better than the U.S. National Benchmarks