

LCGH Neck Trauma Center continues to grow

In June 2004, the North Country Neck Trauma Center opened its doors. Since then approximately 150 clients have been treated for various neck problems, usually with a very positive result. The center utilizes the Melbourne Protocol, which is an internationally recognized program designed to treat a variety of individuals using the most modern technology available. The BTE Technologies Multi Cervical Unit (MCU) is at the heart of the program. When opened the center was the first in New York State and one of only 36 in the United States.

The center is located in the Lewis County General Hospital Rehabilitation Department and is under the direction of Randy Lehman, PT and staff member Caryl Petrus, PT. According to Mr. Lehman, the types of injuries treated are usually the result of falls, motor vehicle accidents, sports/recreation accidents and construction accidents.

Mr. Lehman explained, "All our clients are referred by a physician and are usually referred before surgery but we also see post surgical clients for rehabilitation. Prior to treatment, we perform an evaluation and establish a baseline of the client's range of motion and their strength. Depending on the history of the patient, evaluations are done over a one-two day period. This allows for less pain and increased accuracy in testing. Initial testing consists of a detailed history including a pain evaluation and a subjective disability assessment."

Bill Blunden, PT, director of the Rehabilitation Department, commented, "Following the initial evaluation the specially-trained physical therapist and the physician can tailor an exercise program that focuses on those structures that are impaired. By concentrating on specific and isolated movements, the overall function of the patient can be dramatically improved and at the same time, we can control and reduce pain." Mr. Blunden went on to say, "Treatment consists of either a three-, six- or nine-week program with re-evaluations at each three week interval. This



Photo submitted by Lewis County General Hospital

From left, Sheila Neddo, rehabilitation department clerk, and Randy Lehman, PT, adjust the special equipment utilized in the Neck Trauma Center at Lewis County General Hospital.

allows for modification to the program, as needed, to ensure that the treatment goals are met. Detailed progress notes and evaluations are provided to the physicians to keep them up-to-date on the patient's condition."

The current results of clients utilizing the program have shown that after three weeks of treatment on the MCU, patients have shown a 30% increase in active range of motion and a 40% increase in strength on average. Clients have also reported a 10% decrease in disability after this short period of time.

The Lewis County General Hospital Rehabilitation Department has become a leader in the field of rehabilitation in

the North Country. From its top level physical, occupational and speech therapy programs to its highly trained and experienced staff, they are dedicated to finding the most modern, effective evaluation and treatment techniques to ensure a positive outcome for our patients. Lewis County General Hospital and Residential Health Care Facility strives to meet the ever-changing needs of the community in a patient focuses, family-oriented format. "We Treat You Like Family" is not just a slogan, it is their philosophy.

For more information about the center or to arrange a personal tour, contact Randy Lehman at 376-5225.