



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE RE-IMAGINING REHABILITATION FOR SENIORS

Portage County Health Care Center is extending its commitment to advance rehabilitation technology by adding the OmniVR® Virtual Augmented therapy System to their rehabilitation programs improving resident care and outcomes.

Stevens Point, WI May 1, 2020- Seeking to transform physical rehabilitation for seniors the Portage County Health Care Center in Stevens Point has recently installed the world's first "virtual" rehabilitation system for aging adults in their therapy department. Called the OmniVR®, this technology is making the rehabilitation process more fun and exciting for residents.

The OmniVR® is a virtual reality therapy system utilizing a large touch-screen color monitor, an adjustable high-low stand, a Microsoft® Kinect® motion sensor camera, and specialized software designed to capture resident movements and provide therapeutic biofeedback as they interact in a virtual, game-like world. With the assistance and supervision of a therapist, residents participate in a variety of interactive exercises and activities selected for the individual's specific condition or physical challenge. The programs focus on strength, balance, mobility, walking, endurance and memory. Virtual reality helps make therapy fun and engaging and motivates residents to participate more in therapy while improving their functional outcomes.

Unlike off-the-shelf video game systems, the OmniVR® has been developed specifically for people with physical limitations and is much easier for older adults to use. The graphics are less complicated, and no special platforms or hand controllers are needed. The OmniVR® also provides positive reinforcement, rather than a "win-lose" approach, which can be discouraging for people who are trying to overcome physical challenges. Equally important, the system is focused on professional therapy applications rather than the recreational focus of traditional video game systems.

"All of our residents truly love the OmniVR®", said Marcia McDonald, Administrator. "It gives them something fun and entertaining to do that achieves the same therapeutic goal...and with some people, inspires them to do things they might not ordinarily try." Rehab Care Director Nic Riggs commented, "Once you watch a resident involved in this

interactive therapy session- you fully realize the importance of having 'fun' while 'working hard'." Director of Nursing, Tamie Perez excitedly noted "During our COVID-19 changing lifestyle- the introduction of the OmniVR® was 'just what we needed', a true 'spark of excitement' amidst the implications of COVID-19 restrictions."

Though residents consider the system to be a fun challenge, Portage County Health Care Center therapists are reporting that residents using the OmniVR® exercise harder and longer, and most are more successful in overcoming their fears when using the OmniVR®

"After working with a resident on standing control and balance for some time, therapy was ready to say that they were at a plateau and that they didn't need more therapy. However, once we got the OmniVR® we were able to tap into the resident's competitive side and have them compete against themselves-completing varying exercises to help them push beyond the plateau and increase gains to get back to prior level of care." said Nic Riggs, Rehab Care Director.

The OmniVR® Virtual Reality Therapy System at Portage County Health Care Center is offered in conjunction with Accelerated Care Plus® (ACP), the nation's leading provider of evidence-based clinical programs and rehabilitation technology.

Over the past four years of collaboration with Rehab Care, McDonald noted that the "creativity provided to the skilled nursing home setting has been 'state of the art'." McDonald continued by saying "With the dramatically changing health care environment it is refreshing to have the intimate relationship we do with our therapists. The dynamics of the fluid health care needs of our aging population concomitant with many younger individuals experiencing more dramatic co-morbidities has increased rehabilitation needs significantly. Director of Admissions, Cyndi Glodoski shared that "having a progressive rehabilitation team is critical to successful service provision making the goal of 'returning home' more readily available". Glodoski noted "it is exciting for residents to be able to have such a progressive therapy program available right here in Stevens Point!"

For further information regarding the PCHCC the following contact information is available:

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