

SENIORS FIRST



The Changing Face of Long Term Care

2009 – Issue 6

Therapy Program Helps Client Become More Independent

- ✓ **Over the past three years, the Illinois legislature has been faithful in continuing its commitment to the five-year phase-in of the resident-centered MDS reimbursement system. We thank Illinois legislators for their ongoing dedication to quality care for Illinois seniors.**
- ✓ **We need to continue the fourth, phased-in installment of the groundbreaking, resident-centered MDS Medicaid reimbursement system at a cost of \$90 million (\$36 million GRF).**
- ✓ **The MDS reimbursement system has been extremely successful in enhancing resident health, independence and well being. We have made great advances in providing cutting edge health services to Illinois' elderly citizens. Illinois needs to build upon its track record of success.**

The majority of persons entering today's nursing homes come for short-term stays, using these facilities as stepping stones from hospital to home in recovering from illness and injury. At Forest Villa Nursing & Rehab in Niles, Illinois, many clients benefit from the facility's outstanding therapy and rehabilitation program, including a lovely lady named Margaret Chang.

Margaret is recovering from lumbar spinal stenosis, a painful condition causing severe lower back pain and weakness in her lower extremities. This condition gradually led to Margaret having frequent falls at home and eventually becoming bedbound.

Once Margaret arrived at Forest Villa, the interdisciplinary rehab team quickly went into action to create a results-achieving plan of care to facilitate Margaret's recovery. This team includes the leadership of physiatrists, doctors who specialize in physical rehabilitation.

Therapists administered electrical stimulation on Margaret's back, glutes, quadriceps and stomach to stimulate muscle contractions, increasing her strength and endurance before exercises. At first, Margaret did all of her exercises in bed with staff assistance, working to enhance the strength, flexibility and functionality of her arms and legs.

"Through our work, she quickly became stronger," said Laura Gordon, physical

therapy assistant. Margaret progressed to sliding board transfers, whereby a board was placed underneath her hips to enable her to go into a chair and get in and out of bed. Within a week, Margaret was able to participate in exercises in Forest Villa's state-of-the-art therapy room. This room includes Nautilus equipment that has been specially designed for the elderly.

Margaret uses free weights to build up strength in her arms. In addition, she is doing exercises with the Nautilus tricep press in hopes of being able to push up on her arms and stand independently.

"Margaret's goal is to become strong enough to return home," said Kathy Hansen, therapy director at Forest Villa. "And, with our help, I think she has a very good chance of achieving that goal. It is very rewarding for all of us to use our professional skills to help clients become independent again."

The MDS reimbursement system provides specialized funding for therapy programs like the one benefiting Margaret at Forest Villa. Illinois needs to continue with the fourth installment of this reimbursement system to help Illinois seniors achieve their independence and return home. **In FY 2008, 38,000 nursing home residents returned home because of this innovative system.** We must build upon Illinois' track record of success in promoting resident autonomy, health and well being.

Editor's Note: In this story, the client's name was changed to protect her privacy and the confidentiality of her medical information.