

As a professional in the healthcare industry, Jim Taylor* was sure he knew exactly what to expect after his hip surgery. And his expectations were mostly fulfilled—but one thing surprised him.

“I knew that recovery was going to be difficult, but I was taken aback by just how difficult it was,” he says. “Until you go through it yourself, you don’t realize how unlikely it seems that you’ll ever be back to functioning the way you were before.”

Taylor isn’t alone. Many patients feel that way, and it’s just one factor among several that may make people hesitant to pursue physical, occupational, or speech therapy. Thankfully, therapy programs like the one at Horizon Ridge Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center are helping therapy patients to recover and get stronger every day, dispelling misconceptions one milestone at a time.



Therapy at Horizon Ridge

As part of the Generations Healthcare family, Horizon Ridge employs full-time therapists offering individualized physical, occupational, and speech therapy. This therapy is client-centered, using modern equipment with evidence-based practice to restore function and maximize independence.

Horizon Ridge’s team is headed by Alexis Bansberg, who holds a master’s of speech therapy degree. Rounding out the team are soft tissue mobilization and geriatrics specialist Ted Hurt and doctor of physical therapy Jonathan Wheeler. Bansberg, Hurt, and Wheeler are at the facility working with patients every day, which gives the patients a continuity of care that wouldn’t otherwise be possible. Johnny Nguyen, who holds a master’s degree in occupational therapy and is currently working on his doctorate, focuses on the residents’ self-care needs. These are just a few of the therapists of the large team of therapists at Horizon Ridge. The team offers a multidisciplinary approach to make sure all of the residents’ needs are met prior to returning home.

Speech therapists, such as Bansberg, address cognitive deficits, as well as the ability to safely swallow the most appropriate diet, making sure the resident is safe with eating and drinking.

The occupational therapy team addresses the residents’ activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) during their stay at Horizon Ridge. ADLs include dressing, bathing, toileting, grooming/hygiene, and safety with completion of these tasks. IADLs include grocery shopping, preparing food, doing laundry, handling laundry, medications, and finances.

The physical therapy team focuses on safety with walking, transfers, bed mobility, and getting the resident to use the least restrictive device, whether it is a front-wheeled walker, a cane, a wheelchair, or

no assistive device. The PT team works on strengthening the lower extremities and core and addresses improving balance in a seated and standing position. The team works closely with the resident to work on goals to return to the level they were at before. Sometimes the team is able to get results that are better than where they were before.

Giving Back

The therapy team also gives back to the therapy community by offering a strong student program. Prior to starting their student rotation, the student is given all necessary tools to be successful in their rotation, and they attend our student meeting with one of our team educators to make sure they understand our company's operating philosophy and expectations. We offer a hands-on approach for these students. The students work with the therapists to create treatment plans and come up with their own treatment ideas. We provide a safe learning experience for the student and assure the resident feels they are getting the best care. This program ensures that a student is ready to provide treatment independently by the time they finish our program.

"The therapy team at Horizon Ridge really feels like my team," Taylor says. "Every time I see them, they pick up right where we left off. It's been a huge relief to have these professionals on my side. They know exactly what to do to help me make steady progress."

The team is still running an amazing inpatient program, helping patients like Taylor to regain strength and confidence in order to return safely and prevent hospitalization.

Misconceptions about Therapy

Unfortunately, there is a misconception that therapy will be painful.

"Pain management is one of our main focuses, and we work to increase function at a pace that is comfortable and safe for each patient," says Scott Dagenais, central region therapy manager for Generations Healthcare. "We offer various modalities to overcome pain to ensure we are optimizing therapy to achieve exceptional outcomes. Therapy can help you overcome hurdles that prevent you from being independent. We focus on the patient's personal goals so that every session is an investment towards what they really want to achieve."

Whether the patients need physical, occupational, or speech therapy, or some combination of the three, meeting with a therapist is an effective way to get personalized care that guides them to reach their personal goals.

Some patients would prefer to pursue in-home therapy, and that may be the best option for some. However, for most patients, the physical and psychological benefits of inpatient therapy far outweigh any drawbacks.

“The therapists at Horizon Ridge take a hands-on approach that is not only physical but psychological,” Dagenais says. “They find common interests with the residents and work side by side with them to overcome any mental roadblocks that are keeping them from reaching their full potential.”

Not only is the therapy itself tailor-made, but the unique environment of Horizon Ridge’s therapy room was specifically developed to promote a healing environment. Additionally, the top-of-the-line equipment in the therapy room can assist the rehab potential of each resident and help them achieve their goals.

Taylor agrees.

“The amazing team at Horizon Ridge Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center helped me recover faster and more completely than seemed possible in those first few days after surgery,” he says. “There is no way that in-home rehab could compare.”

**Name has been changed.*