

Health Bulletin



Therapy Helps Stroke Survivors Recover Speech

(NAPSA)—Stroke can rob its survivors of more than mobility. Many stroke patients develop aphasia, a language disorder in which many times the patient knows what they want to say, but cannot always get the words out. An estimated one million Americans of all ages suffer from aphasia, the majority of cases resulting from a stroke.

Aphasia can be effectively treated, however, to allow stroke patients to recover their communication abilities, said Joanne Marttila Pierson, Ph.D., associate director of the University of Michigan's Residential Aphasia Program.

"Once physical rehabilitation is complete, stroke victims who have aphasia can often recover a remarkable amount of their communication ability," Pierson said. "Through an intensive program that focuses on individual and group therapies, these folks can achieve a level of speech and language recovery in six weeks that traditionally requires a year or more of speech-language therapy."

Pierson said intensive programs, such as the University of Michigan's Residential Aphasia Program (RAP), provide 23 hours of weekly therapy for clients, who meet one-on-one or in groups with speech-language clinicians. The program also involves the client's primary caregiver as much as possible to maximize the effectiveness of home therapy, once the client's stay at the program is complete.



Since World War II an intensive therapy program has been helping stroke survivors regain their speech.

RAP was started in 1947 to help World War II veterans who had head injuries recover communication abilities. The program, the oldest and most effective in North America, expanded soon after and has been in continuous existence since. It has provided state-of-the-art therapy to thousands of patients from all 50 states and Canada. Today, the program successfully treats clients as young as 16 and older than 80, with the average patient being just over 54 years old.

Because each patient is unique, the RAP program can be tailored to meet the individual needs of patients and their families, Pierson said. The result: more than 95 percent of clients who complete the program make significant progress on speech and language goals.

For more information visit www.aphasiahelp.com or call (734) 764-8440.