What makes Good Shepherd Specialty Hospital’s Ventilator Weaning Program so successful?

Our interdisciplinary approach to weaning is led by a pulmonologist and includes physicians, nurses, case managers, physical therapists, occupational and speech therapists, respiratory therapists, psychologists, pastoral care staff and registered dietitians.

Individualized care plans meet the specific needs of each patient. We work with the referring hospital to identify obstacles to ventilator weaning prior to admission. Our proactive approach and outcome-based method of weaning patients off ventilators includes therapeutic activity and early ambulation during the weaning process.

Family is an integral part of our rehabilitative team. From an initial tour of the facility to daily care, family members offer insight into patient care and valuable medical history. Be assured, family input is welcome.

Our modern, technologically advanced facility includes 24-hour medical monitoring by specially trained critical care intensivists who use sophisticated full-duplex two-way audio/visual technology to monitor patient care from an off-site location. Plus, the Specialty Hospital uses the most current technological advancements available to assist with the weaning process.

Coordination with a continuum of care allows many ventilator patients to move from the acute-care setting to long-term acute care (Specialty Hospital) and then to an inpatient or outpatient rehabilitation facility.
Kimberly King was diagnosed in 2008 with Stevens-Johnson syndrome, a rare and severe blistering disorder that causes lesions of the mucous membranes and the skin. Her case of Stevens-Johnson syndrome was very serious and progressed to the point that Kimberly ended up relying on a ventilator to breathe. She spent 150 days in various hospital settings, including acute care, intensive care and a nursing home.

Kimberly’s journey included a return trip to Lehigh Valley Hospital after a failed stint at a rehabilitation nursing facility closer to her home in York, Pennsylvania. “That nursing facility was not able to handle my case, and I ended up very ill and back in the ICU at Lehigh Valley Hospital,” notes Kimberly.

When Lehigh Valley Hospital was ready to release Kimberly for the second time to another level of care, her mother visited the Good Shepherd Specialty Hospital and was pleased with the facility, the staff and the encouragement of family involvement. Once transferred to the Specialty Hospital, Kimberly’s rehabilitation began in earnest.

“The Specialty Hospital’s personal care was the key to my return to good health,” says Kimberly. “The nursing staff was terrific. I usually had the same nurse for three days in a row, which allowed the nurses to get to know me and my complicated case. The therapists there pushed me, which is what I needed. If it wasn’t for the Specialty Hospital’s expertise in ventilator weaning, I don’t know where I’d be today.”

Kimberly’s vent weaning wasn’t easy and it took six weeks, but she left the Good Shepherd Specialty Hospital breathing on her own and ready for in-home therapy.

“The case worker at the Specialty Hospital worked with my mom and did an awesome job setting us up with home nursing and rehabilitation care, a hospital bed and other medical equipment,” says Kimberly. “I went home on August 15 and my goal was to walk by Halloween. Well, I wasn’t only walking, but I was driving a motorcycle by Halloween!”

Today, the 44-year-old mother is still working to regain the strength she lost during her long ordeal, but she is well on her way to a full recovery.

“For anyone who needs this level of care, I would definitely recommend Good Shepherd,” says Kimberly. “My experience at the Specialty Hospital was wonderful.”

Good Shepherd Specialty Hospital is a long-term acute care hospital that is a national leader in ventilator liberation.