



## Electronic Health Record Launched

As part of a 3 year implementation, CORE purchased an Electronic Health Record (EHR) system to improve the quality of care for our residents. This system wide conversion improves work flow for our admissions and treatment team with smooth transitions from physicians to direct care staff to accounts receivable. We are the first post acute rehabilitation provider to be completely electronic in our record keeping. This will generate multiple reports for a variety of audiences. EHR will improve our billing and reimbursement cycles with insurance. It will better document progress made by patients and when appropriate increase length of stays, durability of outcomes. It is HL7 compliant so when other providers reach this level of compliance, our records system will be compatible with other outside providers. Our new EHR system is strengthening our position in long-term, and post acute care markets by:

- Centralizing information so CORE staff has easy access to our client care profiles resulting in improved clinical decision making process
- Providing real-time access to updated client health records for all CORE staff communicating changes virtually instantaneously
- Enabling CORE to measure therapeutic results with statistical models to assess the efficacy of therapies and medications
- Improving the overall accuracy of clinical information by eliminating cumbersome paper files and summarizing electronic data efficiently
- Reducing staff time to access and compile information about our clients allowing CORE staff more time for clinical care
- Improving medication supervision accuracy and reducing medication errors
- Improving communication between departments and shifts enabling better monitoring of our client's needs

### Future Developments Include:

- e-Prescribing to interface directly with pharmacies
- e-Labs to communicate lab test orders to and results from our laboratory partners equipped with electronic interfaces.

“EHR is a necessary and fundamental step in the evolution of health care. Being able to provide care more consistently and efficiently with less errors in addition to an integrated

treatment plan will change the entire approach to treatment. In the world of Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychiatric Disorders, Electronic Health Record allows therapists to work more appropriately, truer to the idea of the transdisciplinary rehabilitation as opposed to each therapy working on their own goal. Treatment goals are developed by the resident, family and the clinical team and are carried out throughout the time that you are a patient with CORE and can be maintained throughout your life.

The goals are captured in real time allowing the team to highlight and stay focused on successes, pinpoint what is detracting from these successes and move to overcome obstacles. Jim Misko, Psy.D, Co-Owner & President of CORE Health Care, said. “Looking to the future, your medical records won't just be what happened while you were in-patient at a facility, a patient will have access to and ownership of the details of their medical history, therefore making them a more proactive participant in future decision-making, ensuring an improved quality of life.”

## Community Support

The Brain Injury Association of Texas held regional seminars in Houston and Lubbock throughout September. In addition to CORE Health Care being a sponsor at the seminars, our VP of Clinical Operations, Richard Temple, Ph.D, spoke about “How to be an Effective Consumer of Neuropsychology Services.” These community educational days provided topics that were useful for families and the professional community with information ranging from legislative updates for TBI rehabilitation to psychological needs of the individual with TBI and their family. In 2009, the BIATX will hold their conference in Austin coinciding with the legislative session. Keep watching [www.biatx.org](http://www.biatx.org) for details on how your involvement can help provide funding for Traumatic Brain Injury rehabilitation.

The next event for the Brain Injury Association will be the Walk for Thought held on November 8th on the Texas State University Campus in San Marcos. CORE will sponsor the walk in addition to having an active team of residents, families and staff.



CORE Health Care is celebrating 25 years of innovative treatment and quality care for individuals with brain injuries and psychiatric disorders



## Multidisciplinary Approach to Rehabilitation

Post acute brain injury rehabilitation is a multidisciplinary endeavor. Successful treatment requires many different professionals all working together: physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, cognitive therapists, physicians, and direct care staff. Additionally, admissions professionals and other administrative specialists are necessary to manage the financial aspects of securing and maintaining financial support of treatment. All of these professionals have different educational backgrounds and contribute to treatment in unique therapeutic ways. While licensed therapists and doctors provide skilled treatments in their areas of expertise, the direct care staff are the “eyes and ears” of the treatment team, having the most one-to-one contact with residents, and thereby valuable insights into the needs, preferences, and motivations of each person we serve. Although this diversity produces rich and comprehensive treatment, it also requires cooperation, communication, and appreciation of the roles of other colleagues on the rehabilitation team.

CORE Health Care recognizes the need to nurture the professional relationships among our staff. Each and every staff member brings to the team an invaluable blend of education, training, and experience. Additionally, staff at our different units (Oak and Cedar on our long-term campus, Hilltop, our rehabilitation unit, and Draper, our semi-independent house) develop unique insights and skills. To promote improved communication among staff, increased productivity and morale, and cross-pollination of ideas and skills, CORE is launching a novel initiative in the 4th quarter. All CORE employees, including upper and middle managers, program directors, supervisors, therapists, and administrative personnel will work alongside direct care staff on all units to obtain first-hand experience with the inner workings of the rehabilitation process and the day-to-day perceptions of our residents. Also, direct care staff will begin working at all campuses instead of being assigned primarily to only one. This will provide a vehicle for transferring this wealth of knowledge across all CORE programs.

In the last newsletter we discussed CORE’s commitment to cutting edge techniques in neuroplasticity. This latest staff training initiative is consistent with the principles of neuroplasticity, as it promotes novel experiences

in our staff, allowing each CORE employee to develop new skills, insights, and knowledge to the benefit of our residents. These steps are just small parts of our overall vision to set CORE Health Care apart as a world class provider of rehabilitation services.

## CORE Health Care collaborates with Posit Science

Ever since the initial popularity of personal computers in the 1980s, companies have been producing software purported to improve brain functioning and facilitate cognitive rehabilitation. Intuitively, it seemed obvious that computers were an excellent tool to deliver “brain building” exercises in a precise and stimulating manner. Unfortunately, most of these attempts were long on hype and short on research and rarely demonstrated effectiveness. The problems with these initial efforts were twofold. First, there was no solid theoretical rationale for why these programs would improve thinking skills. Second, few or no attempts were made to scientifically evaluate the effectiveness of the products and make necessary adjustments.

Recently, Posit Science Corporation developed two software products targeting audiological and visuospatial cognitive skills. The audiological program, the “Brain Fitness Program,” was developed under the guidance of Dr. Michael Merzinich, a pioneer in brain plasticity and the creator of the cochlear implant. InSight, the visual program, was developed at the University of Alabama-Birmingham under the direction of Dr. Karlene Ball. Both programs were initially directed to address cognitive deterioration in the elderly. However, these programs have potential to improve cognitive skills in individuals with traumatic brain injuries, strokes, developmental disabilities, and psychiatric illness. Each program includes a variety of exercises that are enjoyable and adjust difficulty level based on the individual’s performance, fostering a sense of achievement and limiting frustration that is inherent in the development of any new skill.

CORE Health Care is collaborating with Posit Science to evaluate the effectiveness of this promising technology. CORE President Dr. James Misko and VP of Clinical Operations, Dr. Richard Temple, have fostered a relationship with the scientists at Posit Science to integrate this technology to our comprehensive rehabilitation program. CORE residents will participate in carefully controlled trials of both the Brain Fitness Program and InSight, with regular cognitive assessments to determine effectiveness. This is one more example of CORE staying on the cutting edge of scientific advancement to maximize recovery in the individuals we serve.

## CORE is focusing on HEALTH

Healthier lifestyles are very important to our brain’s plasticity and CORE is encouraging all forms of healthier eating and increased exercise. Two long-term residents at our Cedar campus have been actively losing weight on the Nutrisystem plan. Charlotte has been eating the meals from Nutrisystem for over a year and has lost 80 lbs. In May, she started back on a balanced, portion controlled diet provided at CORE combined with a structured exercise plan and has continued and maintained her weight loss. Another resident, Linda, who is wheelchair bound, has lost over 105 lbs over the past two years and continues to lose on the plan. We couldn’t be more proud of their successes.

Rehabilitation at our Hilltop and Draper campuses utilize occupational therapy, focused on making healthy food choices during grocery shopping and meal planning. Additionally, residents in all of our programs are encouraged to participate in exercise plans by utilizing our work out equipment, trips to the Boudreaux Powerhouse gym, competitive walks on the track around the facilities, gardening, swimming in the pool and actively taking care of the animals.

CORE Health Care staff are dipping their toe in the healthy activity of competitive/entertaining athletics arena. Patrick Fischer, Direct Care specialist at Hilltop has put together a team of 10-12 staff members and they are competing in the Capital City Kickball League in Austin. The games are a great team building experience as well as great exercise and just a very fun time. Additionally staff from CORE attend the games to root for their co-workers and many are being recruited for future games. The team “Hard CORE” plays on Tuesday nights through November and they are looking forward to next season!



Join CORE Health Care through our next 25 years as leaders in rehabilitation and research!

## New Instructional DVD for Families Affected by TBI

CORE Health Care has developed a unique, instructional DVD and manual, the CORE Family Trainer, designed to instruct families on how to interact with their loved ones who have suffered a brain injury. After the initial medical crisis of a brain injury, families are often faced with behavioral problems that can be difficult to understand and disruptive to everyday family life.

“We receive calls from families across the country looking for resources, some sort of guidance to help them understand the changes in their loved one with a brain injury and how to effectively communicate with them,” Eric Makowski, CEO of CORE Health Care and President of the Brain Injury Association of Texas, said. “We scoured the country but found that there was no such tool in existence, so we created it.”

In addition to a user friendly manual, the CORE Family Trainer packet provides a DVD of conceptual role-playing that illustrates common problems families may encounter at home with friends or loved ones who have survived a brain injury.

“A brain injury can be extremely difficult, not only for the patient, but also for his or her family members and loved ones,” Richard Temple, Ph.D., Vice President of Clinical Operations for CORE Health Care, said. “This instructional DVD shows actual scenarios and the appropriate ways in which to respond to them.”

The DVD includes paraprofessional staff members from CORE Health Care who have years of experience working with brain injury patients, rather than actors. Their first-hand knowledge of “de-escalation techniques” and behavior modification gives the scenarios an authentic feel. The scenarios illustrate “less effective” techniques versus “more effective” ways to respond to common behaviors, followed by a panel discussion between two rehabilitation professionals and a neuropsychologist.

“Understanding why an individual with a brain injury behaves in a particular way is only part of the learning process,” Temple said. “Learning effective ways to counter that behavior is a critical key to helping the patient to recover.”

As families review the manual, watch the DVD, and practice the conceptual role-play situations, they will gain a deeper understanding of the two key concepts of recovery.

**Behaviors that appear to be willful may not be so.** Although the behavior may look to be willful and purposeful, it is often not a conscious act. Many times, these behaviors are the result of the injury relating directly to specific areas of the patient’s brain. Understanding this point allows the caregiver to learn how to avoid taking these incidents personally.

**There is hope for things to improve over time.** The very latest rehabilitation research empirically proves that new and permanent neuronal connections can be made, even in impaired brains. This knowledge of the brain’s plasticity, opens up a world of opportunities for long-term survivors of brain injury, developmental disorders, and psychiatric illness. The brain is always changing, and it is becoming increasingly evident that rehabilitation can affect the direction and utility of that change. The home environment can be a positive catalyst to help foster continued long-term recovery if some thought is given to creating a supportive situation.

The skills made available to families through the CORE Family Trainer DVD are supported by research and are well established principles of treatment found in the best rehabilitation facilities throughout the country.

To order the DVD, please visit [www.corefamilytrainer.com](http://www.corefamilytrainer.com).



To work each day with the highest ethical principles in a quest to further develop the skills of our residents and team members.

## STAFF LISTING

### Professional Staff

#### Senior Leadership Team

##### CEO/Owner

Eric Makowski

##### President/Owner

James S. Misko, Psy D

##### VP of Operations

Chrystal Wells

##### VP of Clinical Operations

Richard Temple, PhD

##### Director of Long-Term Care

Scott Archer, LMSW

##### Director of Rehabilitation

Lesley Kohler, MS, LPA

##### Director of Quality Assurance/ Hiring Recruiter

Kerri Alvis

##### Director of Marketing/Admissions

Dianne Crawley, MHA

##### Maintenance Supervisor

Craig McMillan

### Other Professional Staff

#### Physical Therapists

Lorri French, MS PT

Stephanie Love, MS PT

#### Psychologist

Lori Stowers Wright, Ph D

#### Speech Pathologists

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Jerilyn Iliff, CCC-SLP

Maria Strum, CCC-SLP

#### Occupational Therapists

Rheta Ladzinski, OT

Lana Mathis, COTA

#### Consulting Physicians

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Todd Buchanan, MD

Shelly Riley, MD

Ralph Sharman, MD

#### Case Managers

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Family-owned and operated, CORE is honored to have provided a trusted source of residential care since 1983.



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Watch for the Winter Newsletter:  
A Celebration of CORE's 25 years!