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South Port Square

Port Charlotte, FL

Building Confidence and Self-Esteem in Seniors While Improving Strength and Balance

South Port Square in Port Charlotte (FL) is an SHP Senior Living Services facility. They have four large senior living facilities in Florida; South Port Square is the first to get a Balance System.



Smita Shinde, Wellness Director at South Port Square quickly states, “It is an amazing machine... we have had terrific results... 99% success rate, they all improve. The Balance System picks up small problems before they are noticed in traditional exams and we can begin to address the problems before the fall.” The residents actually line up in the morning to use the Balance System with 70% of those in the wellness program using the Balance System three-five times per week. It is being used for both Fall Screening as well as training. To quote Smita Shinde – “believe in it (the Balance System), work with it... it works.” In just four to six weeks she has seen marked improvements in her residents “...the scores just keep getting better”. She continued... “the adjustable skill levels allow the clinician to continually challenge the patients in their efforts to improve. Random Control Mode is the most popular training mode for all patients, helping improve reaction time along with strength and balance.”

Residents, most of which are in their eighties or nineties, are seeing great results. “Seeing is believing,” said Smita. “They see others

getting better, they see their results improving, they work harder and they too get better.” She also added that it builds confidence and self-esteem, two factors that are vital for continued independence.

Margaret Parker (age 86) has progressed in just three-four months, from a failing Fall Risk Screening Test score of 3.5, which is on the high side of the 72-89 age range, to today’s score in the 1.2 range, which places her on par with scores from patients 36 years old. She has improved so much that recently while preparing for a social event she surprised herself when she realized she had been walking without her walker for the first time in a long time. “I am excited and extremely happy with the results; it has added to my life and increased my confidence and independence; the Balance machine, and our program, is terrific.”

Bob Miller – improved from failing the Fall Screening test to becoming the most improved and being crowned “King of Balance”. “People comment on how much better I am walking. The whole program has been well worth the time and effort. The Balance System gives comprehensive evaluation of my condition and the subsequent progress of our entire exercise and therapy program.”

Joy Wilson (age 85) went from a poor score of 2.8 in November to 1.9 in March and 1.2 in April crowning her, along with Jeanne Miller the “Queens of Balance”. “I am much more mobile, more active, and overall it has been a great experience thanks to the Balance System combined with great clinicians and programs.” Joy stated. Jeanne, who uses the Balance System each morning five days a week could not climb stairs or walk any distance. Today, she scores 0.9 which puts her within the 17-35 age range on the normative data.

Ann Freeman (age 87) a frequent faller (4-5 times per day) has worked on the Balance System for six months - today she is Fall-Free. She had been using a four-wheel walker and now simply uses a cane for extra “steadiness”. Another exciting success is Jean Hoskins (age

91) She uses the Balance System 3 times a week. When she first entered the program she could not take a single step without her walker, today she comes to the wellness center parks her walker and spends her time walking independently.

Miriam Miner reports that after just six weeks of balance training she went from off the chart failure on the Fall Screening Test to showing super improvement. “I have progressed from using a walker all the time to only using a cane if I have to walk a long distance.” She related the following story... “Recently I had to attend a graduation ceremony for my grandson at the Superdome in New Orleans. I was able to walk up the stairs and through the Superdome with only the arm of my son... I am so pleased with my results; it has been amazing. Before the Balance System I would have never been able to attend.”

South Port Square also has a second Balance System in their Harbour Health Systems rehabilitation/nursing home facility on the campus. This Balance SD is just now getting up and running but already is seeing use in total knee patients as well as stroke rehabilitation. Jennifer Cooley PD/COTA is the Program Director, she states “Right now, in the skilled nursing facility, we are using it to screen any long term care residents that have had falls and may have balance issues. The therapist will test first, and then if deficits are noted we will get treatment orders from the doctor. Then we use it as a treatment tool to show progress with balance deficits. With the acute patients we mostly use it as a treatment tool. Obviously not everyone is appropriate (for the Balance System), but in the geriatric population balance is a huge issue and we plan to use the Biodex to reduce falls and to maximize patient outcomes to return home safely.” The Balance System is being offered to the community at-large for outpatient Fall Screening programs.

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Utilizing the Biodex Balance , Unweighing and Gait Trainer Systems in a Coordinated Program for Seniors



A 104 bed facility located on South Beach, Miami, FL is part of the larger Plaza Health Network made up of seven facilities in the South Florida region.

Founded by a loving group of elderly Jewish women, this nursing home opened its doors in 1954 as a not-for-profit facility. These ladies formed the “Women’s Auxiliary” and worked diligently to provide housing for the needy and impoverished elderly Jewish individuals. Today, the facility is truly multi-cultural with a large Latin patient population. Offering both skilled nursing and assisted living facilities, it is among the leading facilities in rehabilitation advances in the south Florida area. By providing residents access to advanced rehabilitation testing and training equipment “we can offer unsurpassed treatment to even our most debilitated residents. With the addition of the Biodex Gait Trainer 2, the Balance System and the Unweighing System, we have gone beyond most senior facilities and are breaking new ground in the care of our residents. No longer is the nursing home a place where we simply store the elderly. At Hebrew Homes we care for their needs in extraordinary ways and strive to return them to active, independent lives back in their community.”

Joel Kuttler, the senior therapist at Hebrew Homes said about the Biodex equipment “we can show progress to patients, patient’s families and doctors... progress is paramount, often patients are depressed and in need of the confidence to move forward. This equipment does that, it shows them they CAN safely get better and live better lives. With early hospital discharge becoming the norm, the need for more advanced rehab techniques and equipment is growing. The reports generated by the Biodex equipment aid us in providing documented progress reports to insurance providers and referring physicians, enabling us to procure needed approvals for continuation of care.”

The progression in most cases of rehab, according to Kuttler, follows a basic path. “The patient usually begins in a non-ambulatory or debilitated condition and is progressed to standing, using the Unweighing System alone. Then they move on to the Gait Trainer, while wearing the Unweighing System, and finally on to the Balance System and Gait Trainer without the assistance of the Unweighing System. It is an integrated system. People have a natural, basic need to progress, they want to improve; this equipment allows them to do just that and see “written proof” that they are

in fact improving”. Kuttler noted that in the past, patients had to take the word of the clinician as to their progress; he noted with the new Biodex equipment they can see the results for themselves on the screen and in reports. One example is Hermenez Torres, presented as a non-ambulatory stroke victim. After just two weeks on the Gait Trainer he is beginning to walk. “The results are almost unbelievable” said Kuttler, “patients progress at a faster rate than before and gain confidence faster.”

“Many hospitals are looking to facilities such as ours as “Step-Down-facilities.” Once the patient is well enough, they are moved to rehab facilities for continued care. Hospital stays are getting shorter and patients at the rehab facility in need of concentrated care...we provide that care.” From a financial position it makes sense. Once the hospital has exhausted Medicare payments or insurance coverage, the patient can move to a “step-down facility” where the “insurance clock is restarted” and care is resumed under medical coverage.

*Hebrew Home of Miami Beach
320 Collins Avenue
Miami Beach, FL*

Regency Oaks

Clearwater, FL

Clearwater's Regency Oaks Uses Biodex Balance & Mobility Programs to Enhance the Quality of Life of SNF and ILF Residents



Continuing care retirement communities are acknowledged as the ideal long-term locale for many seniors, allowing a continuum of care from full independence to advanced skilled care, as needed. Taking a “balanced” approach to reducing fall risk over that continuum, Regency Oaks in Clearwater, Florida is providing state-of-the-art balance exercise and rehab to all its residents, with two Biodex Balance Systems – one in its Sylvan Health Center SNF, and one in its Independent Living wellness center.

“Regency Oaks has 388 independent living care units,” explains Chelby Clarke, director of rehabilitation services, “and a 60-bed skilled nursing facility in our Sylvan Health Center. We also have a 25-room assisted living facility, Sylvan Terrace, attached to our SNF.” According to Clark, the great majority of the acute patients at the Sylvan Center SNF are referred for rehabilitation following orthopedic procedures – mostly hip and knee replacement. “We also get referrals of patients following abdominal surgery, and generalized weakness. Most of our nonresident acute patient referrals come from physician referrals, followed by word of mouth,” she says. Clark explains that much of that rehab centers around helping patients to normalize their weight bearing on the affected limb.

Most, she believes, have developed altered weight bearing in response to their arthritic pain prior to surgery, and postoperative discomfort after surgery. That places them at increased risk of a fall.

“The Biodex Balance System shows them when they’re not applying full weight bearing to their leg, and – when they are, without pain – it gives them the confidence to walk without fear of pain.”

Many surgeons have a specific protocol – how long to apply only 25% weight bearing, then 50% weight bearing, and finally full weight bearing. Even after they are capable of full weight bearing, many are still – consciously or subconsciously – avoiding full weight bearing on the affected leg. The graphic display on the Biodex Balance System helps to persuade them it won’t be painful to apply full weight bearing when they’re not on the Balance System.”

Typically, patients with hip or knee implants spend between four and six weeks at Sylvan Center, the exact period depending in part on their ambulatory and cognitive status prior to the surgery.

“If they come in capable of significant weight bearing and otherwise normal health, it could be as little as four weeks. And if there are significant other health issues, it could be as long as 8 to 10 weeks. Clark says that the daily Medicare rate averages \$400-450 a day.” That’s a blanket reimbursement. If they have IVs,

their reimbursement will be a bit higher. That includes all their charges – room, board, therapy, nursing, medication. However, if they need to see their orthopedist or neurologist during their stay, their transportation and medical service fees also must be paid out of their \$400-450 per diem.”

Our residents love the BioStep®

In addition to the second Biodex Balance System, the Regency Oak Wellness Center, directed by therapist Zelko Ratkovic, also has a Biodex BioStep semi-recumbent elliptical cross-trainer. “Our residents love the BioStep,” Ratkovic says. “*Many of our ILF residents have little or no history of exercise. They are easily intimidated by most exercise equipment, but not by the BioStep.* Those new to exercise typically come in about three days a week. They don’t have to work hard, as they would with a leg press. Between 7-10 people a day use BioStep.” Ratkovic believes the graduated protocols and display are important to resident acceptance. “The BioStep offers five levels of exercise. The display is very encouraging. After a few weeks, at one level, they want to move to higher levels, maybe exercise longer. They meet other exercising residents, and they begin motivating each other.

“They love the BioStep – it gets them into the exercise habit.”

Regency Oaks
Clearwater, FL

South Pointe Plaza Rehabilitation and Nursing Center

Miami Beach, FL

South Pointe Plaza Takes Major Step Toward Maximizing Their Residents Potential... Safely and Effectively.



South Pointe Plaza is a 230 bed skilled nursing facility located in the heart of the South Miami Beach Art Deco District, just one block from the ocean. At South Pointe Plaza the comprehensive rehabilitation programs are directed towards assisting residents to reach their maximum level of function following a hospital stay. All therapy programs are geared towards rehabilitation of residents who may have suffered a stroke, brain aneurism, a hip or other fracture, or major and minor surgeries. South Pointe offers physical, occupational, and speech therapy services, in a fully equipped therapy area, which encompasses an entire floor at the facility. It is here that the new Biodex Balance System, along with the Biodex Unweighing and Gait Training Systems are located.

According to Jose Rodriquez - Director of Rehabilitation for South Pointe... "the patient can actually see results on the screens... in the past it was very subjective - they had to believe me when I told them how they were

doing... now they can see the results for themselves... and they like that." Rodriquez also notes the increased safety factor when using the Gait Trainer and the Unweighing System together. "The fear of falling is uppermost in residents minds and by utilizing the Gait Trainer with the Unweighing System we can remove much of that fear and concentrate on rehabilitation. Building confidence along with strength and balance speeds the recovery time and improves results". An additional feature noted by Rodriquez is the built in heart-rate monitoring on the Gait Trainer. "Before I would have to stop the exercise to check the resident's pulse, with the Gait Trainer they are monitored as they exercise. In the case of cardio-rehab it allows me to easily record pre and post-exam heart rate without interrupting the program."



The Biodex Fall Risk Screening Program is also being utilized here. Rodriquez recounts that "we had a 93 year old patient who seemed fine, she walked on her own and had no history of falls. However, she complained

that she bumped her arm often while walking. We did a Biodex Fall Risk Screening Test on the Balance and she failed. Her balance was very poor... we began a balance training program and she was quickly able to return to normal activities... all BEFORE she fell."

Rachel Schuster - Facility Administrator calls the results from using the Biodex Equipment "amazing... the Biodex equipment has enhanced the quality of our Rehabilitation program at South Pointe Plaza. Our therapists have assurance that our residents are safe while this equipment is in use and our residents are more inclined to participate in their exercises and for a greater length of time because they feel comfortable and fully supported. I truly feel that this equipment has enabled us to maximize our residents' potential by building strength, mobility, and endurance which we hope will ultimately help to prevent recurring injury."

*South Pointe Plaza
Rehabilitation and Nursing Center
Miami Beach, FL*

Plaza Health Network

Miami Beach, FL

Miami's Plaza Health Network Uses Biodex Fall & Mobility Program to Reduce Falls and increase Medicare Referrals

"...we've been able to improve our ratio of Medicare to Medicaid population. The Biodex systems help us achieve higher RUG (Resource Utilization Groups) scores, and thus, higher average per day Medicare rates."



Plaza Health Network is a state-of-the-art network of eight not-for-profit 501(c)3 rehabilitation and skilled nursing centers located in the neighborhoods throughout Miami-Dade County, Florida. Each of the network's centers has a Biodex Balance System and a Biodex Gait Trainer. Five with therapy departments are also equipped with Biodex Unweighing Systems – affording those sites a complete “Biodex Balance & Mobility” assessment and rehabilitation package “We’ve found the Biodex balance and mobility systems to be valuable marketing as well as clinical assets,” explains Epstein. “Properly promoted to area hospital discharge planners, physicians and the community, they’ve helped Plaza Health to be the leading providers of Medicare paid short-term inpatient rehabilitation in our area.” The Hebrew Homes network gets its name from its Jewish founders who opened its first Miami facility in 1954. Today, its residents reflect the ethnicity of the region.

Balance System helps attract profitable Medicare patients.

In the experience of Plaza Health Network, a patient referred for 30 days of post-arthroplasty rehab generates about \$15,000 in gross Medicare revenue, Epstein reports. “After one such patient, a Biodex Balance System is essentially ‘free,’” Epstein says. “The Biodex system enables us to

provide referring orthopedists with an objective assessment of their patient’s precise balance issues upon admission to a Hebrew Home.” Over the succeeding weeks, as Plaza Health Network therapists follow surgeon orders in increasing weight bearing on the operated limb, and challenging patient balance, the Biodex system generates progress reports that enable Plaza Health Network to provide surgeons with similarly objective evidence of their patients’ progress.

“The surgeons love this kind of care, and make their preferences known to both patients and discharge planners,” Epstein claims. “We regularly get referrals from as far away as Broward County, explained by “The doctor wants the patient rehabilitated on your equipment.”

According to Epstein, the Biodex Balance and Mobility system can have a significant impact on a skilled nursing service’s bottom line. “In our case, we’ve been able to improve our ratio of Medicare to Medicaid population,” he reports. “It helps us achieve higher RUG (Resource Utilization Groups) scores, giving rise to higher average per day Medicare rates. And it lets us compete for privately insured patients, who often have restrictions on lengths of stay, because we can show demonstrable, objective outcomes.”

Because Jackson Plaza is one of the five Plaza Health Network facilities with Biodex Gait Trainers and Unweighing Systems, Moore and the nurses attempt to identify bed- and wheelchair-bound residents whose quality of life might be improved with aggressive use of these optional instruments. “We have one 300-pound resident who’d been bedridden for two years, and was afraid even to try to stand. Finally, we were able, with use of the Biodex

Unweighing System, to give her the confidence to attempt steps over ground. As soon as she can safely stand on her own, we expect to begin training her on the Balance System, and then on the Gait Trainer. She’s now motivated to lose weight – “I’m going to walk again!” she tells us. “Only perhaps 10 or 20% of our wheelchair residents can achieve that degree of mobility, even with a significant training effort,” Moore reports, “but I believe such mobility training pays dividends to both residents and facilities, even if it results just improved strength and balance in transfers from bed and chair, in showering, and other activities of daily living. Such residents require fewer aides, and have increased confidence that improves their outlook and cooperation, and certainly their quality of life.”

*Plaza Health Network
Miami Beach, FL*

The Gardens Court

Palm Beach Gardens, FL

Integrating The Biodex Balance System into their Rehabilitation Programs



The Gardens Court is a 120 bed facility located on the east coast of Florida, part of the Life Care Centers of America. Besides The Gardens Court, Life Care operates more than 200 skilled nursing, assisted living, retirement, home care and Alzheimer's centers in 28 states - from Boston, Massachusetts to Hilo, Hawaii. The Gardens Court has the Biodex Balance SD, as do sister facilities Darcy Hall Nursing and Rehabilitation in West Palm Beach and Lakeside Health Center also in West Palm Beach.

After meeting Rita Zukerman PTA, Bea Scafidi LPN/BHS and rehabilitation patient Josephina Ruf at The Gardens Court facility, it was immediately obvious that the Balance System has been successfully integrated into the rehabilitation/wellness programs at this facility. They use the Balance System SD in conjunction with the aquatic training and standard rehabilitation protocols in a cohesive rehab program. Rita notes that *“the Balance System helps show the patients their instability... IT PROVES IT TO THEM in black and white, which allows us to begin working with them before they fall.”*

The patient that was in rehab during my visit was Josephina Ruf, a spunky resident of 65+; she had a severely broken leg caused by an accident with two large dogs and underwent surgery in January 2008. Doctors inserted pins and a plate into Josephina's leg and released her to The Gardens Court for rehabilitation. Josephina was non-ambulatory for over eight weeks prior to beginning rehab; she was depressed and anxious to “get better”. To quote Josephina “I can walk again, this machine is amazing, a miracle...it is hard sometimes, but that is good, it makes me work and I can see myself getting better.” She wanted me to walk with her to her surgeon's office (across town) to tell him about the Balance System “he should see this – he should put all his patients on it.”

*The Gardens Court
3803 PGA Blvd
Palm Beach Gardens, FL*

Suffield House
Suffield Connecticut

Suffield House Uses Biodex Balance System & BioStep[®] to Enhance Rehabilitation of Diverse Acute-Care and Assisted Living Residents and increase Medicare Referrals



“Now we use the Balance System to prepare Parkinson’s patients for occupational therapy, where they stand at the kitchen sink and have to reach for things...”



What percentage of your 128 skilled nursing beds are occupied by long-term care versus short-term rehab?

Kathleen Mack, Director of Admissions: About 70% of the population is long-term care, and 30% short-term rehab patients.

Where do most of your short-term rehab patients come from?

Mack: We’re right on the border of Massachusetts and Connecticut, so we work with Bay State and Mercy Hospital in Massachusetts, as well as Johnson Memorial Hospital, Hartford Hospital, Saint Francis Hospital, and Rockville in Connecticut.

Is there significant competition for short-term rehab patients?

Mack: Yes, because there are quite a few facilities around us that provide short term rehab in addition to palliative as well as long-term care, so we’re all competing for those same individuals.

What mix of clinical diagnoses do you typically see?

Mack: We have a strong orthopedic component. As a result, we have orthopedic surgeons who directly refer patients to us from both Hartford Hospital and Saint Francis. Our relationship with those surgeons is so strong that my business cards and Suffield House packets of information are at the doctors’

offices. And so, when one of these surgeons is getting a patient ready for the procedure, they’re informed that they’re going to have a very short stay at the hospital, followed by a period of rehabilitation at Suffield House, until it’s safe for them to return home.

As a result, we have “pre-books” – so we know in advance that, for example, a particular surgeon’s patient will undergo a knee procedure on Monday, and that they’ll be here Thursday. So we’re able to keep the momentum going and hopefully not have a lot of beds down.

Are all Medicare patients, or are some privately insured?

Mack: The majority are Medicare. We have just become providers to several private insurers, such as HealthNet. Up until now, we have worked with Medicare as the primary insurer, with the secondary insurers being Blue Cross, AARP, Cigna, Aetna, U.S. Healthcare etc. We also work with Workers’ comp.

How do you staff your physical therapy department here?

Anthony J. Zukowski, Director of Physical Therapy: Here at Suffield House, we have three physical therapists, one physical therapy assistant and one rehab aide here throughout the week. We also have two occupational therapists and two contract speech therapists. Both PT

and nursing students from Central Connecticut State University and University of Connecticut rotate through the department.

We have a varied patient mix. Beyond our orthopedic patients, we see patients with strokes, recent amputees, and cardiac recovery patients who need to build endurance. We see patients with neuromotor diseases such as Parkinson’s, COPD, and post-op complications patients, too.

At the current time, how are you using the Biodex Balance System?

Zukowski: We’re working with a lot of orthopedic patients, as well as our general population of residents who are having gait and balance disturbances.

The Balance System is being used as an adjunct to our standard physical therapy. We enjoy using it to stimulate patients to do work harder than they might otherwise wish to do. First of all, it gives them a visual feedback on how they’re doing at normalizing their balance.

(continued on the web)

Read the rest of this story and other case studies at www.biodex.com/seniorliving