



SUMMA Health System Rehab Hospital

A partnership with Vibra Healthcare

with physicians, nurses, etc. “In addition to the personal accomplishment, it is important for patient care.”

Bush is one of five physical therapists from Summa Rehab Hospital who have achieved the American Board of Physical Therapy’s specialist certification in neurology. The group represents a significant number of the 37 therapists in Ohio who currently have the certification.

“It shows their level of passion and commitment to the patients,” believes Michelle Dudek, PT, MPT, director of therapy services. “The therapists we have here all build each other up and really rise to the occasion. They want to make sure they are doing everything they can for their patients.”

To be eligible for the certification, physical therapists must demonstrate advanced clinical knowledge, experience and skills in a special area of practice. Specifically, they must have spent a minimum of 2,000 hours in direct patient care in the specialty area before they can begin preparation for the examination.“

While studying, you learn the most up-to-date, evidencebased treatments from specialists worldwide,” Bush adds. “It really helps with patient care.”

That information proved especially helpful for Jennifer Williams, PT, DPT, NCS, who was working with a patient recovering from a stroke and broken back. The patient had suffered her injuries while en route cross-country in an RV with her husband to celebrate retirement.

“She had a brace, and we were dealing with a stroke at the same time,” Williams says. “They wanted to travel back home in the RV and continue her care there.”

Faced with the patient’s low endurance, limited memory and problem solving abilities, Williams turned to what she had learned while studying for her neurology certification to simplify the patient’s process for relearning.

“With all the articles on brain retraining, it helped me think outside of the box,” she says. “Instead of repeating the task over and over, I decided to try something different, give her a different cue.”

Williams did this by using different colored tapes and making a game out of her therapy.

“Right foot, red; left foot, blue. We used visual cues, practiced it and wrote down the steps. We would sit in the RV and talk about sequencing. We also videotaped it, too,” Williams says. “By having her stop and think about what she was doing, what the next step or color was, it had good carry over. We found a way it would be meaningful for her, for her brain to understand what she needed to do.”

Looking beyond just traditional approaches to therapy is what sets Summa Rehab therapists apart, according to Dudek.

“This situation required some unique problem solving that went beyond what many therapists would think to try. Our therapists fought hard to find something the patient would understand,” she says. “We do that a lot.”

Summa Rehab Hospital Advance certification impacts patient care The road toward clinical specialization is not an easy one, but for five physical therapists from Summa Rehab Hospital the journey was well worth it.

“To specialize is the highest achievement that you can get as a therapist,” says Katlyn Bush, PT, DPT, NCS, adding that it also helps the profession be recognized among different disciplines,

