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AllPro Home Health Enhances Dysphagia Therapy Program

VitalStim Therapy patients showing increased swallowing ability and sustained improvement

Port Charlotte, Fla., August 27, 2009 – AllPro Home Health has recently expanded its options for patients with dysphagia, or difficulty in swallowing. The home health agency, serving Charlotte and Sarasota counties, has added VitalStim Therapy to its dysphagia program.

Developed by Empi Recovery Sciences of St. Paul, Minn., VitalStim Therapy is a non-invasive neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES) therapy that has been shown in clinical research to speed a dysphagia patient's recovery when used in tandem with standard dysphagia therapy. Often this improvement means getting a patient off a feeding tube faster, with significant cost savings to the healthcare system and an improved quality of life for the patient.

"I am delighted that we have VitalStim Therapy available to our patients now," said AllPro Speech-Language Pathologist Dr. Carol Roark. "I see so many people with this affliction and now we can offer them an effective and innovative solution, in addition to the outstanding care we already provide."

Dysphagia is a sometimes neglected medical condition that affects 15 million Americans and is generally caused by a neurological disorder or event, such as a stroke, degenerative neurological diseases and head and neck cancer. Without proper management, dysphagia can lead to aspiration, pneumonia, choking, chronic malnutrition, severe life-threatening dehydration, an increased rate of infection, longer hospital stays, long-term institutional care and even death.

VitalStim Therapy, which was cleared by the FDA in December 2002, is administered via a portable, dual-channel electrotherapy system. The patented system includes specifically designed electrodes for delivery of NMES for the treatment of dysphagia.

A recent published study, "Adjunctive Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation for Treatment-Refractory Dysphagia," detailed the measured clinical effect of the VitalStim program on patients with chronic, treatment-refractive dysphagia:

- 80 percent of patients reached the defined primary end-point of clinical improvement in swallowing ability;
- All patients in the study significantly increased the range and amount of materials consumed orally, with most of the patients progressing from a restricted, single-consistency diet to a full oral diet;
- The average weight gain for the group over the three-week treatment period was two pounds;
- Patients involved in the study perceived significant improvement in their ability to swallow after treatment;
- No patient experienced any swallowing-related medical complication over the treatment period.

Dysphagia therapy is one of the many programs offered by AllPro Home Health, which also specializes in skilled nursing; physical, occupational and speech therapies; and medical social work. To learn more about AllPro Home Health and the dysphagia program, visit the AllPro Web site at www.allprohomehealth.net, or call (941) 258-3355.

Photo: VitalStim Therapy.jpg

VitalStim Therapy, now offered by AllPro Home Health for patients with difficulty swallowing, is administered via a portable, dual-channel electrotherapy system.