

Mercy Fairfield rehab center gets accredited

Two years after opening, center achieves industry 'gold standard.'

By Chelsey Levingston, Staff Writer

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FAIRFIELD — Mercy Health-Fairfield Hospital's inpatient rehabilitation center has been accredited by an independent agency two years after its opening, the hospital said.

The hospital's Acute Rehabilitation Center opened in December 2009. It has received three-year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities International, the "gold standard" in the field, said J.B. Boothe, the Mercy center's program director.

"I see an overall difference in the services that are provided in a CARF facility," Boothe said.

The center has 14 beds for hospital and referral patients who need physical, speech and occupational therapy. Typical patients include people who have suffered a stroke, hip fracture, muscle weakness or brain injury, Boothe said.

Noralee McKee was one of the stroke patients the center helped. The Fairfield woman, 65, had a stroke in November. She stayed at Mercy Fairfield's rehabilitation center for 32 days for therapy to help her walk again and regain feeling in her left arm.

"I just know that I couldn't walk, that scared me the most," McKee said.

Today, she can do most everything for herself again, including getting on her hands and knees to play with her 7-month-old grandson.

The biggest advantage of being able to get therapy at Mercy Fairfield was how close it was to home so her family could visit, she said.

McKee is one of the about 360 patients the rehabilitation center sees a year, according to the hospital. Boothe already senses the need for a future expansion of the center, which has been full two or three times this year.

"We're going to get full more often," she said.

Mercy Fairfield is set to start construction on a \$10.5 million expansion and renovation project to make all its patient rooms private, which it expects to finish later this year.

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