



REHABILITATION SERVICES

Dr. Paul Kornberg Celebrates 20 Years of Transforming Young Lives at TGH

It was 2002 when Dr. Paul Kornberg, medical director of the pediatric rehabilitation program, joined the TGH Children's Hospital and started his journey of transforming young lives.

That year, Tampa General was fortunate to secure the first pediatric physical medicine and rehabilitation doctors in the Tampa Bay area to lead the program. Currently, there are less than a dozen specialists with this expertise in Florida. It can be difficult for families to even find these experts because there are so few of them.

Since his youth, Dr. Kornberg says he always wanted to help people and use his time for something that was useful to others and work with kids. "I was very lucky to find this field because it is such a small niche that I didn't even know about it going through medical school. I was fortunate that my wife, a pediatric physical therapist, made me aware of the field," he reflected. "We didn't even have the field at my medical school. Bringing it to my attention made me realize I could combine my love of pediatrics, neurology, orthopedics and my interest in quality of life and function."

Dr. Kornberg completed his training in a combined five-year residency in pediatrics and physical medicine and rehab at the Baylor College of Medicine, where he also earned a master's degree in rehab technology. Dr. Kornberg says, "When I'm treating patients, I try to keep the role of technology and the potential of technology in their realm of care to help improve their independence and quality of life." He added, "And for people with disabilities, in particular, it can really open up doors for them and help them succeed in areas that they might not otherwise be able to."

Dr. Kornberg was heading down the path towards orthopedic surgery, but he wasn't crazy about the thought of working in an operating room and having the limitations of being able to only help people in that way. He found that he really liked being able to combine his interests.

Dr. Kornberg has treated thousands of children over the years in both inpatient and outpatient settings. He also served on the advisory council for the Florida Department of Health for an eight-year term in the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program.



Dr. Paul Kornberg, Medical Director of the TGH Pediatric Rehabilitation Program

Physical medicine and rehabilitation, or Physiatry, is a field that focuses on function, whereas most medical fields focus on the management of diseases and illnesses. Most primary medical treatments focus on physiology and anatomy, whereas physical medicine and rehab takes things to the next level. It helps open up doors to allow people to live their lives and demonstrates to them how they can function at home, in school and in the community. Injury prevention and proactive choices to improve health are very important, and Dr. Kornberg always encourages healthy lifestyle choices including exercise and nutrition.

"Here at Tampa General, I work with many children who have gone through trauma. That's probably the most common patient diagnosis here in the hospital setting for me," Dr. Kornberg said. "We see children with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, multiple trauma from motor vehicle crashes or other types of traumatic events, and it can be very rewarding to help a child and their family navigate the recovery and return home safely and working towards their goals."

The patients he sees, who are dubbed "Kornberg's Kids" on a distinctive star-shaped sign placed on their hospital room doors, have often had prolonged illnesses which diminish their strength and level of independence. In the outpatient setting, he works a lot more with people who were born with congenital problems like cerebral palsy

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Pediatric Inpatient Rehabilitation Team Supports Teen's Spinal Cord Surgery Recovery

Sarah Wild was born with a very rare spinal cord malformation. Despite the condition, up until about a year ago, the 15-year-old was just like any other teenager — active and outgoing. Then in June, she began experiencing leg weakness. As Sarah was growing, her spinal cord was unable to properly grow with her due to her condition. Sarah underwent a highly complex spinal cord surgery. The surgery went well, but her spinal cord was subsequently swollen and it would take time to discover the end results of the surgery.

“Two weeks after the surgery, Sarah could somewhat stand up with assistance, but we couldn't take her home from the hospital,” said Kelli Wild, Sarah's mom. “She wasn't at a point where we could care for her adequately at home. Inpatient rehabilitation was recommended.”



Sarah Wild proudly displays her Certificate of Graduation from Tampa General Hospital's inpatient pediatric rehabilitation program.

Sarah was brought to Tampa General Hospital (TGH) where she received inpatient pediatric rehabilitation services. For three weeks, TGH occupational and physical therapists worked with Sarah four times a day to help her relearn everyday functions from putting on socks to learning how to maneuver from a wheelchair to a shower.

“Going through this was not only a huge physical challenge for a teenager, but it was an emotional journey for us all,” explained Kelli Wild. “The TGH Rehabilitation team had the expertise to help her physically and they also genuinely cared about Sarah. They

were fun and funny and did a great job connecting with her. We laughed a lot, as well as cried. Sarah liked the team and the team liked her and that goes a long way to help someone recover.” According to Kelli Wild, the rehabilitation team went above and beyond, even helping Sarah celebrate her 15th birthday at TGH with cupcakes and birthday decorations.

From the beginning of Sarah's care, the goal for the rehabilitation team was to help her leave the hospital walking. When it was time for Sarah to say goodbye to TGH, she received an official TGH Certificate of Graduation and she had reached the goal of walking with a walker.

Sarah has continued to work hard to meet her goals and is currently walking without assistance. She's even going up stairs. Recently, she attended Tampa's homeschool homecoming.

Her family is hopeful for continued improvement and believes it was the TGH Rehabilitation Program that catapulted Sarah's recovery forward.

“I am very grateful for the program. Honestly, I feel like had we not done inpatient rehabilitation, I would be concerned about where we would be right now,” said Kelli Wild. “The TGH Rehabilitation Program strongly influenced the success Sarah's having now. They're a great team — every one of them — and having wonderful therapists made all the difference in the world.”



Following her care at Tampa General, Sarah Wild was able to participate in Tampa's homeschool homecoming.

Caring for Pediatric Inpatient Rehabilitation Patients for More Than 20 Years

Physical and occupational therapists at Tampa General Hospital's (TGH) inpatient rehabilitation program work with injured or ill patients to help them improve mobility and, in some situations, relearn everyday activities like walking or showering. And nurses like Lori Amador are there to support therapists, patients and their families 24/7.

“When a patient first arrives, I assess them for things like whether they can walk or use the restroom independently or if they need assistance. I'm continually assessing them to see how they're progressing,” said Amador, a clinical RN in the Pediatric Med-Surg Unit at TGH. “At the same time, I help augment the care that therapists provide, working with patients on rehabilitation exercises outside of normal therapy. I also help prepare patients and their families for when it's time to be discharged from the hospital,” Amador said. “When it's time for a rehabilitation patient to go home, we want them and their family feeling confident and assured that their recovery journey can continue outside of the hospital if needed.”

A TGH nurse for 24 years, Amador has dedicated her career to caring for young patients in the hospital's Pediatric Med-Surg Unit and inpatient rehabilitation program. “I always knew I wanted to provide care for kids,” Amador said. “I know everything I do is to help them feel better. Also, kids are resilient and even when sick, enjoy having fun. We have visits with pet therapy dogs and ‘unicorn’ therapy horses. Pediatric inpatient rehabilitation is actually a pretty happy place.” Inpatient rehabilitation is intensive. In some cases, patients receive three hours of daily therapy while they are in treatment. For Amador, the best part of being a

nurse in a rehabilitation program is seeing her young patients improve. “Sometimes patients, especially children who were active kids before they were injured or got sick, don't realize how much rehabilitation is helping them day-to-day,” she explained. “I enjoy sharing their progress with them and seeing them get back to doing activities they used to do.”

One of the best parts of supporting a pediatric rehabilitation program for Amador is graduation day. “We do a graduation ceremony at the end of care to celebrate the culmination of all their hard work. The graduation ceremony is a party and it's a complete surprise for patients.”

After more than 20 years working in pediatric inpatient rehabilitation, it's no surprise Amador loves her job. “I don't think of my job as a job. A lot of people say, ‘Oh I have to go to work.’ I never think of it like that, I never dread coming to work. I have a family and other interests of course, but TGH is my other family. I feel like this is what I am supposed to be doing. It's like another part of me.”



Lori Amador, a Clinical RN in the Pediatric Med-Surg Unit and inpatient rehabilitation program, has more than 20 years of experience in caring for and helping to rehabilitate young patients.



TGH Rehabilitation Hospital Opens as Part of The Expanding Medical And Research District

To meet the needs of the growing Tampa Bay region, Tampa General Hospital and Kindred Rehabilitation Services, a business unit of LifePoint Health, opened the TGH Rehabilitation Hospital in May 2022.

The new 80-bed, freestanding rehabilitation hospital provides advanced services for patients recovering from debilitating injuries, illnesses, surgeries and chronic medical conditions.

“For decades, our inpatient rehabilitation unit has been the premier

rehabilitation center in the Tampa Bay region for patients recovering from complex injuries or illnesses,” said John Couris, President and CEO, Tampa General. “With their proven expertise and reputation as a national leader in rehabilitation, Kindred is the perfect partner to develop the TGH Rehabilitation Hospital and take our legacy of advanced care to the next level.”

A joint venture, TGH Rehabilitation Hospital is located at 1307 W. Kennedy Blvd., between Oregon and Willow avenues and includes:

- 80 generously sized private patient rooms.
- A transitional living apartment — designed to simulate a residential apartment — to provide patients with the ability to participate in daily activities, such as cooking, in order to prepare to return to independent living. Patients transitioning back to home may also stay overnight to practice returning skills in a supported environment.
- A 24-bed secure unit dedicated to the care of patients recovering from neurological conditions such as stroke and traumatic brain injury. The unit features a separate therapy gym for these patients.
- Day rooms for relaxation and socialization on each of the three patient floors.
- A meditation room, dining room and kitchen.
- A gym for physical and occupational therapy featuring a ceiling-mounted body weight support harness system for patients re-learning balance and walking skills while rebuilding their strength.
- Rooms for dialysis treatment.
- An outdoor courtyard with recreational and activity spaces — including a bocce court, putting green and garden site — that also features different terrains so patients can practice walking on steps and different surfaces.
- Specialized programs for patients recovering from neurological injuries and amputation.

Under the leadership of Heather Higgins, CEO, TGH Rehabilitation Hospital, Kindred manages the day-to-day operations of the new hospital, which employs more than 140 caregivers and staff. Most of those staff previously worked in TGH inpatient rehabilitation.

Tampa General provides medical support services, such as imaging, and lab and surgical procedures to the new hospital and offers pediatric and outpatient rehabilitation at alternate locations.

Young Burn Patient Returns to Youth Football and Achieving Good Grades

On a school night last May, 9-year-old Owen Ares was fast asleep when a fire engulfed his family's Seffner home. As soon as his mother, Karen McGinnis, smelled fumes and saw the flames, she quickly called 911, as neighbors were yelling out for the family to wake up and get out.

She immediately went to her son Owen's room, where she heard him moaning and crying for her. But fire blocked his room. She and her boyfriend grabbed a wrought iron chair and tried to break his window, but it was not enough to get him out. Just then, two Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office deputies pulled up. The deputies even beat fire and rescue personnel because they were nearby filming an episode of the TV show "Cops," which will appear in an upcoming episode. The deputies had heard the 911 call on dispatch and then went to work and used a tool to break open the window completely.

Within three minutes, they pulled young Owen out of his room. He had almost passed out from smoke inhalation and incurred second and third-degree burns on his face and arms.

McGinnis said it was very traumatic to see his face covered with black soot.

Owen was transported by Hillsborough County Fire and Rescue to the TGH Emergency and Trauma Center. In addition to the burns, he had swelling in the lungs, organs, and airways. The medical team stabilized him before transferring him to the Pediatric ICU.



Patient Owen Ares tries on a Bucs Super Bowl ring shared by Bucs COO Brian Ford.

"I was scared we could lose him and didn't know if he would survive," said McGinnis. "Yes, it was the deputies that pulled him out, but everyone from the lady who verifies the insurance, to the housecleaning, to the specialized therapy he got . . . everything came together to make him better."

Owen spent about two weeks in the TGH Children's Hospital. He couldn't walk well at first and needed physical therapy. The therapists would sit him up and work on his mobility. His Achilles tendon needed to be stretched and rehabilitated, so they encouraged him to push his wheelchair to gain strength.



The Tampa Bay Buccaneers COO Brian Ford and Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister make a special visit to patient Owen Ares.

Being a picky eater, the therapists told Owen that if he would eat some of the food important for his recovery, they would host a chicken nugget party for him.

Throughout his therapy, he loved spending time with the therapy dogs, Belle and Millie. The games in the playroom helped him relax and take his mind off his discomfort.

As an added bonus, and because the two deputies were so instrumental in his survival from the fire, Sheriff Chad Chronister and Tampa Bay Buccaneers Chief Operating Officer Brian Ford even paid a special visit to Owen in the hospital. They visited with him in the Child Life playroom and brought Owen a generous gift bag, including his own personalized jersey. He even got to try on a Super Bowl ring. Ford invited him to come to a future training camp session, which he later experienced, and got to see Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady practice.

A traumatic experience really began to turn around.

Since then, Owen has fully recovered. He had serious blisters on his face and right arm which disappeared within three weeks of discharge. And his previously diagnosed asthma has even resolved.

Owen must watch his sun exposure and be sure to wear plenty of sunscreen, which is an easy pill to swallow considering what he has been through.

Owen has been able to return to his love of youth football and martial arts and continues to do well in school. He and his mother are grateful for the excellent care and say, "Everyone at TGH was fantastic!"



Tampa General Hospital Rehabilitation Program Ranked #40 in Nation by U.S. News and World Report

Tampa General Hospital's rehabilitation program is ranked 40th in the nation in U.S. News & World Report's annual Best Hospitals rankings and ratings for 2022-2023.

U.S. News & World Report's annual Best Hospitals rankings and ratings, now in their 33rd year, are designed to assist patients and their doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive quality care for challenging health conditions or elective procedures.

To be recognized as a national leader in health care and rehabilitation services is a testament to the unwavering dedication and commitment to the world-class clinical excellence delivered by Tampa General's entire rehabilitation program team day after day.

Dr. Kornberg, continued from page 1

(CP) – the most common movement disorder in children, which has to do with the development of the young brain and how it affects their movement.

He also works with burn patients, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida and post-operative patients with congenital problems like CP who have gone through an orthopedic surgery to help improve their function. The surgeries can help, but it often takes multidisciplinary rehab to achieve their goals because the surgery alone is not enough. He also sees patients with Guillain-Barré syndrome, strokes and other disabling conditions.

Dr. Kornberg is always happy to see when a child and family overcome what seems like insurmountable challenges and return home with hope for the future. The most satisfaction he gets is being part of a team that can help a kid and their family get through probably the hardest thing they have ever experienced in their life. “Knowing that we can give them the support that they need, the education and training to move on and to get home and get back into life is the goal,” Dr. Kornberg said.

And he finds satisfaction in knowing those moments when children find themselves turning the corner and away from feelings of depression, hopelessness, or despair. When they start to realize that things are getting better and they’re in a good place. He feels we have what these patients need here at Tampa General.

Dr. Kornberg proudly shares that for the last fiscal year quarter, 100 percent of the families responded in a follow-up survey that they felt they received the training they needed to help their child get better and function at home. “We are supporting those families through these difficult times because there aren’t a lot of people who do this,” he said. “We are the only program that provides inpatient rehab in the Tampa Bay area, and we are one of maybe a handful of programs in the state, so I feel very fortunate to be here and with an organization and team that really supports that.”

When asked if he ever runs into former patients, he said that very recently he ran into one of the patients who called him out and thanked him for helping him after a bad car accident.

Dr. Kornberg always looks forward to the annual pediatric rehabilitation party called the “Reindeer Reunion,” which was on hiatus during the pandemic. “It’s a great opportunity to have patients come back who have been through the program, and we get to see people who have gone through amazing challenges and overcome them in many cases and giving back to the community,” he said.



Dr. Paul Kornberg reunites with a former patient family at the Reindeer Reunion holiday party.



(L) Karen Hussey, nurse practitioner, PEDI Rehab program and Dr. Paul Kornberg. Karen organized the 15th annual Reindeer Reunion, with help from many volunteers.

“We even have patients who have been through the program here that have gone on to help other people and pursue careers in medicine and related fields. They have gone through terrible trauma and very difficult recoveries and rehab but have gone on to train in the medical field and become counselors and psychologists,” he said proudly. “I have one patient whose goal is to become a social worker here at the hospital in the pediatric program to work with trauma patients. It’s nice to see the circle of people giving back.”

Dr. Kornberg’s advice to a young person who might be contemplating going into the field: “You want to love what you do. It’s not a field that people will go into for glory or economic success, but if you want to help people, and work with incredible people and see how challenges can bring out the best in people, this is a field that offers a lot of rewards emotionally and is very satisfying to be a part of somebody’s recovery.”

Outside of his clinical work, family is his number one priority. He has a supportive wife and two young adult children who have done well. One is in grad school and the other is in college, studying artificial intelligence and computer science.

He loves music and taking care of himself; eating healthy, exercising, and getting outside in nature is where he turns to recharge his batteries.

Dr. Kornberg is quick to show his gratitude to the team. “I can’t do anything without the amazing team at Tampa General, from the nurses to the social workers . . . the psychologists, the therapists, the techs, the dietary people. Everybody plays a role.” He also is appreciative of the other medical staff on the pediatric team, including the surgical teams. “Everybody brings something to the table. That’s very important to help these families and the children achieve their goals. I’m lucky to be surrounded by all these great people.”

And Dr. Kornberg’s colleagues have similar praise for him. “Dr. Kornberg is one of the most compassionate and hard-working people I know,” said Karen Hussey, a nurse practitioner with inpatient rehabilitation. “I am honored to work alongside and learn from him every day. He is dedicated, passionate, and thorough and is constantly thinking of ways to improve our patient’s function and quality of life.” Hussey emphasized that he has made a huge impact on countless children’s lives and works tirelessly to continue to provide the best and most comprehensive care to each one of our patients. “We are so very lucky to have him leading our team!”

Tampa General Hospital Honored as a Top-10 Rehabilitation Center by Newsweek

Tampa General Hospital has been named to America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers 2022 by Newsweek. Tampa General's inpatient rehabilitation program is ranked 10th in Florida for its quality of care, quality of service, quality of follow-up care, and accommodations and amenities.

The Tampa General program offers adult, pediatric and outpatient rehabilitation services. The team includes physicians, psychologists, nurses, recreational therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, social workers and many others who work together to foster an improved quality of life for our rehabilitation patients.

Rehabilitation services are offered for:

- Stroke
- Brain injury
- Neurological conditions
- Trauma
- Spinal cord injury
- Amputation
- Orthopedic injury

Newsweek partnered with global market research and data firm Statista Inc. for its list of leading inpatient physical rehabilitation centers. Rankings were by state or region and based on a rigorous methodology that included a nationwide online survey of more than 4,400 medical experts with knowledge of physical rehabilitation centers as well as an



analysis of key performance indicator (KPI) data scores published by the U.S. Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Rehabilitation centers were also evaluated on whether they had received Commission on Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and Model System honors. Tampa General is accredited by CARF for both adult and pediatric inpatient rehabilitation programs. It is also designated as a provider of rehabilitation services by the Florida State Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program (BSCIP).

To read more about Newsweek's 2022 list of America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers, visit www.newsweek.com/rankings/americas-best-physical-rehabilitation-centers-2022/florida.

About Tampa General Hospital Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation Services at Tampa General Hospital is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for the following:

- Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation – Adult and Pediatric Rehabilitation Patients
- Rehabilitation Services is also designated by the Florida Department of Health as a provider of services to both adult and pediatric Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program (BSCIP) patients. Our services are accredited by The Joint Commission, and TGH is proud to be a Magnet hospital.



In addition to inpatient programs, the continuum of care includes services provided by hospital-based rehabilitation therapists, outpatient rehabilitation services, and physician services for new and follow-up patients in the Rehabilitation Medical Clinics.

RehabMatters

Rehab Matters

is published by Tampa General Rehabilitation Services for its patients and other stakeholders.

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