

Specialty clinics offer multitude of benefits

Ruth Vaughn, a former elementary school teacher for 33 years, wrote the book on patience. She spots that characteristic easily in others and noted it immediately in working with her Madonna therapists.

Ruth, a participant of Madonna's CVA (cerebrovascular accident) clinic, credits her post-stroke progress to combined efforts of the clinic doctor's feedback and working with her patient, diligent therapists.

Ruth came to Madonna in March after suffering a stroke due to complications from surgery. She was an inpatient for five weeks, then transitioned to outpatient status through May.

As part of her discharge, Ruth began the stroke clinic in August. The clinic helped pinpoint the challenges she was facing after returning home.

Ruth, 85, noted that her clinic follow-up visit recommended additional therapy. She appreciated the clinic doctor and notes, "He can point out discrepancies patients might not notice, as in favoring one leg over the other."

Ruth is amazed at the therapists' ability to gently nudge patients along toward their goals. "It's hard to get people my age to cooperate if they're tired or hungry."

In addition to the stroke clinic, Madonna offers several

other specialty clinics, including spinal cord, spasticity, and brain injury. Madonna is proactive in setting clinic visits for patients to return six weeks after their discharge date. The clinics are designed for assessment and follow-up therapy after a patient is discharged and require a doctor's order.

Traditionally, a patient is scheduled for a doctor's evaluation, physical and occupational therapy, along with speech and neuropsychology therapy. The clinic team can recommend additional services or changes to a home program depending on a patient's need.

Addie Vance, clinic manager, stated, "Due to the success of the spinal cord clinic (in operation since 2005), we added CVA (stroke) and brain injury clinics in the last year." She said the response from previous patients has been very positive.

Ruth is on that list of satisfied patients. She feels her progress wouldn't be as great without participation in the stroke clinic and the follow-up therapy. "I've started

practicing with a cane vs. my walker — a big milestone," she emphasized.

"I believe a higher power drew me to Madonna; look at the strides I made. The therapists became my teachers," she reflected. In Ruth's case, the Asian proverb rings true — "When the pupil is willing, the teacher will appear."



Ruth Vaughn, shown with her husband, Larry, credits Madonna's stroke clinic with her progress.