



HELPING HANDS

BY DARCY LADUE-VARGAS

SCO EXPANDS HAND AND UPPER EXTREMITY THERAPY SERVICES

Offering more responsive, flexible and integrated care, the Hand Center at St. Croix Orthopaedics (SCO) recently expanded its hand and upper extremity therapy services at the High Pointe Health Campus in Lake Elmo, MN. This service expansion was part of an extensive 8,000 square foot remodel of SCO's clinical facility that was completed in 2010.

"We added hand therapy services in our Stillwater clinic in 2009," said Melanie Sullivan, SCO Chief Operating Officer. "We immediately saw value to having surgeons and therapists within walking distance of each other. With on-site therapy, surgeons can stop in to check on a patient's progress, and therapists can check with surgeons on splinting, bracing and rehabilitation orders—which is extremely comforting and beneficial in achieving high-quality outcomes for our patients. Because of its success at our Stillwater clinic, adding therapy services into High Pointe's remodel plan was a given."

EXPERIENCED STAFF

With more than 30 years combined hand and upper extremity therapy experience, the therapists at SCO are passionate about their field. All are specially trained in orthopaedic care and have experience in outpatient orthopaedics. Lead therapist Maureen Scanlan, OTR/L, CHT, has more than 18 years of hand therapy experience. “Although I am new to SCO, I have worked with this group of patients for many years and have a deep connection to this community,” noted Scanlan.

A leader in her chosen field, Scanlan was the first hand therapist in the state of Minnesota to use the ASTYM (A-stim) System. “I see great value in this system for our patients. Instead of ignoring degenerative soft tissue, the ASTYM system aids in directly addressing dysfunctional soft tissue. For patients, this means getting them back to work, sports or their favorite activities quicker,” explained Scanlan.

Of the four hand therapists, both Scanlan and Sara Jorud are certified hand therapists. The certification process is rigorous and requires a minimum of five years of hand therapy experience, four thousand patient hours, and one year of independent study. SCO hand therapists Shannon Rechiene and Tanya Reckinger have completed those requirements and will be sitting for the certification test soon.



BROAD SPECTRUM OF SERVICES

Our team of hand therapists provides comprehensive rehabilitation services for injuries and maladies of the hand and upper extremities – from the shoulder to the elbow, wrist, hand, fingers and thumb, including:

- External fixation of both common and complex wrist, finger, forearm, and elbow injuries and conditions
- Rehabilitation of soft tissue injuries of the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, and shoulder
- Tool assisted soft tissue mobility techniques (ASTYM)
- Ergonomic education that includes adaptation or workspace modification assessments
- Educating patients on home exercise programs and self-management techniques to facilitate rapid and safe return to work, sports and daily activities
- Same day custom splints to help athletes return to their sport
- Relieve CMC Arthritis and promote healing for thumb sprains
- Increase joint mobility by correcting boutonniere deformities and other UE joint contractures

“The broad spectrum of services offered at the Hand Center give my patients all the help they need to get back to their normal life,” said upper extremity subspecialist, Dr. Steven Meletiou. This sentiment is echoed by two other hand fellowship trained SCO doctors, Drs. Nick Meyer and Ryan Karlstad. Says Dr. Karlstad, “I am pleased that my patients are able to receive all their care right here at SCO.”

SCO patients benefit from excellent communication and personalized care enhanced by the close proximity of our surgeons and therapists. This seamless care puts our patients at ease and helps in the healing process. “I have found the coordination between the therapists and myself to be very beneficial to my patients,” commented Dr. Meyer.

The Hand Center is open Monday through Friday with same day walk-in appointments available.

WHAT IS HAND THERAPY?

According to the American Society for Surgery of the Hand (ASSH):

Hand therapy helps a patient regain maximum use of his or her hand after injury, surgery or the onset of disease. Treatment is provided by a hand therapist. To become a hand therapist, a health care professional must first train as an occupational or physical therapist and then receive additional training in hand therapy. Hand therapists teach exercises, apply modalities and create custom splints to help the hand heal and to protect it from additional injury.

Call 651-439-8807 to schedule an appointment.