



3130 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago, IL 60657
Ph: 773.525.5200 Fx: 773.525.5276
E-mail: info@balancechicago.com

Contact: Jennifer Fortney
773/529-7547
jfortney@cascadecomms.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 10, 2007

PRESS RELEASE

CHICAGO CENTER OFFERS NEW HOPE FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE DIZZINESS AND BALANCE DISORDERS

Revolutionary Vestibular Disorder Treatment Has Potential to Help Millions of Affected People

Chicago, Illinois – According to the National Institutes for Health, more than 90 million Americans, age 17 and older, have experienced a dizziness or balance problem. About nine million of these people have been severely disabled by frequent feelings of spinning or a whirling sensation, imbalance, difficulty focusing their eyes, and other similar symptoms, including severe nausea or vomiting. Chicago Dr. Michele Kehrer is out to make a difference in people's lives at her center, Lifestyle Physical Therapy and Balance Center in Lakeview.

Approximately 50% of the population will suffer from dizziness and balance disorders, which affect men and women of all ages and backgrounds, at some point in their lives. It's the second most common reason why people visit a doctor. Vestibular insults can be caused by infection, head trauma, exposure to ototoxins, tumors, allergies, migraine, vascular insult, positional vertigo just to name a few. Non-vestibular insults are caused from hyperventilation, dehydration, decreased blood flow to the brain, arteriosclerosis, osteoarthritis, cardiac issues, stress, tension, fatigue, etc.

Dizziness significantly decreases one's quality of life. People who suffer from dizziness lose their independence and often their careers. All too often, they are forced to retire and/or become disabled due to dizziness and balance disorders. Approximately 90% of the people that Dr. Michele Kehrer of Lifestyle Physical Therapy and Balance Center treats are 99% improved within eight weeks. Chances are that these people have suffered from dizziness for years.

"Many of my patients complain of feeling nauseous, like they are falling, or as if they're on a spinning bed. Their symptoms are so severe they are forced to make drastic changes in their lives," explains Dr. Kehrer. "Most of these problems are caused by a disturbance in the vestibular system, which is located in the inner ear. Through comprehensive testing we are able to pinpoint the cause of the symptoms and develop an effective treatment plan."

-more-

Overall, there is a general lack of correct treatment for people who suffer from dizziness and balance problems. All too often, they are prescribed medication and discharged from care. This medication increases risk of falling by 80% and can be addictive. It also suppresses vestibular function, essentially worsening the problem that it is prescribed to treat. The medication is fine when prescribed correctly and utilized in conjunction with physical therapy. Unfortunately, there are very few practitioners that truly understand dizziness and balance disorders, and even fewer that are correctly treating it.

Opened in fall 2006, Lifestyle Physical Therapy and Balance Center offers new hope and healing to people with severe dizziness and balance disorders. The Center's founder, Michele Kehrer, is a doctor of physical therapy and a specialist in treating people with dizziness and balance disorders, one of a handful in Illinois.

Aging and Dizziness/Balance Disorders

"The treatment offered at my Center is especially important now due to the increased number of Americans living longer," said Dr. Kehrer. "Sixty-five percent of individuals over 60 years old experience dizziness or loss of balance, the result of generalized functional degradation."

Initially, imbalance is situational and manifests when the righting reflexes cannot meet the demands of a challenging environment, such as a slippery surface. As the functional degradation progresses, imbalance occurs during everyday activities, independent ambulation becomes difficult, and the likelihood of falling increases. When instability is constant, the individual resorts to the use of a cane, a walker, or a wheelchair. The restrictive and constraining fear of falling is a major concern for the elderly. It results in withdrawal, a progressive decrease in activity, and a steady decline in the quality of life and mental well-being.

With the help of new technology and specialized equipment, Dr. Kehrer's treatment plans work. More than 90% of Center patients experience a marked decrease in their symptoms within four to eight weeks. Kerry Ferris is a good example.

A Real Life Story

Kerry Ferris, a 37-year old Chicago woman and mother of three children under the age of five, leads a busy life that includes a full-time job in her family-owned business.

Last winter, after catching a cold, Ferris began feeling a constant rocking sensation and severe dizziness. "It felt like I was on a boat all the time," Ferris explains. Her condition left her nauseous, debilitated and exhausted. She was unable to work or spend quality time with her children. "Walking up a flight of stairs was exhausting. I had no energy for my family and even regular activities like grocery shopping were nearly impossible."

Ferris consulted with four different physicians, was prescribed medication and told that hopefully she would not end up in a wheelchair. After receiving little relief from her symptoms, Ferris found Dr. Kehrer and the Lifestyle Physical Therapy and Balance Center. She was diagnosed with a vestibular disorder called bilateral peripheral vestibular hypofunction. Ferris found relief after only two weeks of treatment with Dr. Kehrer. "She gave me exercises to do and I work to keep my stress level in check," said Ferris. "Today, I'm about 95% back. I'm back to working, traveling, grocery shopping and, most importantly, spending time with my children. I feel like I have my life back."

About Lifestyle Physical Therapy and Balance Center

Lifestyle Physical Therapy and Balance Center provides comprehensive evaluation and treatment of dizziness and balance disorders, including vertigo, vestibular neuronitis, Meniere's disease, BPPV, and more. The goal of the Center is to enhance the quality of life for those affected by physical disorders and promote a safer home life, greater independence, and reintegration into the community, work and recreational activities. For more information, visit www.balancechicago.com, www.vetibular.org.