



News & Information

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PATIENT CREDITS REHAB CENTER FOR QUICK RECOVERY

Bloomington, Ill. (July 8, 2007) – Like so many thousands of women diagnosed with breast cancer each year, Iris Serrano underwent a radical mastectomy followed by chemotherapy and radiation treatments. She seemed to be cured until one year later, in 2005, when the disease ravaged her body again and a mass on her spine was discovered.

Serrano's oncologist gave her 10 sessions of radiation treatment and anti-inflammatory injections to reduce the size of the tumor. When the mass did not respond to treatment, she was given a grim prognosis. Chemotherapy was not an option and there was not a neurosurgeon in Puerto Rico where she lived who had the experience to manage her case.

"I never saw my oncologist again," says Serrano. "He passed my case to his colleagues and I knew there was nothing they could do for me."

When Serrano's oncologist discharged her from the hospital, she was admitted to a local rehabilitation center. Her condition deteriorated and she was transferred back to the hospital after staying at the facility for only a month.

Soon after, Serrano's father passed away. Her sister, Nylsa, a resident of Downer's Grove, Ill., came to Puerto Rico for the funeral.

"Everyone knew that they would soon be attending my funeral if I didn't have the needed surgery to remove the mass on my spine," says Serrano. "I kept praying that God would help me find a way to cover the cost for me to come to the U.S. for treatment."

One week later, her prayers were answered. Serrano's sister Nylsa called her and said that she was bringing her to Chicago!

Days after arriving in Chicago, Serrano underwent spinal surgery at Rush University Medical Center. A month later, she was admitted to Alden Valley Ridge Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Bloomington for rehabilitation. Nylsa says she chose Alden Valley Ridge



Rehabilitation and Health Care Center based on the facility's aggressive Optimal Rehabilitation program.

After months of rehabilitation therapy at Alden Valley Ridge, and a year of intense medical treatment, Serrano is preparing to leave soon. "I am going out of here walking and not in a wheelchair like I came in one year ago," says Serrano.

"The doctors said that I would probably walk again, but that it would be a very long and very extensive recovery process," says Serrano. "To their amazement, I was mobile again after just a couple of months of rehabilitation at Alden."

Serrano continues, "When I first arrived at Alden Valley Ridge, I couldn't stand. Now, I can walk and have regained most of my independence. The excellent nursing and rehabilitation staff have helped me resume more of my previous level of functioning than the doctors thought were possible!"

Alden Valley Ridge Rehabilitation and Health Care Center offers programs that address the needs of short-term therapy and rehabilitation patients as well as long-term residents.

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