



## Somesville Rehab Pilots Portable Balance Equipment

Maine Coast Memorial Hospital, | The Ellsworth American

ELLSWORTH — Falls are common among people over 65. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified falling as the top cause of injury-related deaths in this age group. Falls affect about 30 percent of seniors and trigger 1.8 million injuries annually.

Elderly people's risk of falling, however, can be effectively reduced through various interventions. All of Hancock County's hospitals are equipped to properly assess an individual's balance and risk of taking a tumble. Noteworthy, though, is the fact that Maine Coast Memorial Hospital staffers campaigned for and served as guinea pigs in the development of a portable balance-testing and training device enabling them to provide those services at all their hospital's rehab sites including Ellsworth, Somesville and Gouldsboro.

For five years now, the Ellsworth hospital has had a "Before the Fall" program in place in which its physical therapists used a stationary Biodex Balance System machine to test and work with rehab patients to regain balance and mobility. These patients' balance improved 58 percent on average, prompting the Somesville Rehabilitation Center's staff to approach Biodex Corporation about developing a portable system.

Dr. Tom Adams, a family physician at the Southwest Harbor Medical Center, says falling is probably the No. 1 injury among his elderly patients.

"Balance is a testable thing," Adams noted. He has patients whose balance has improved markedly after having been tested and participating in the "Before the Fall" program. "We have people who have tested better afterwards and their self-confidence has improved."

Not only did Biodex take the cue, but the company chose Somesville Rehab to pilot its portable Biosway testing and training machine. In 2008, the satellite office began using and evaluating the new machine, taking it as a screening tool to two health fairs. The physical therapists provided comments and suggestions incorporated in the final Biosway device.

In addition, Biodex invited veteran physical therapist Mary Ann Radford to speak about "Before the Fall" program and successful pilot project at the company's annual national sales conference in South Beach, Miami, Fla. In recognition of the Somesville staff's efforts, Biodex also donated a Biosway unit to the Ellsworth hospital's rehab department.

For more information about the technology, contact Maine Coast's Ellsworth rehab office at 664-5472, Somesville Rehab at 244-7161 or Gouldsboro Rehab at 963-4170.



Maine Coast Memorial Hospital's physical therapy clinical coordinator, Jon Morren, and physical therapist Mary Ann Radford show how to test and improve a person's balance on the portable Biosway machine at the Somesville Rehabilitation Center. PHOTOS BY LETITIA BALDWIN



### Reference:

[http://mcmhospital.org/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=642:somesville-rehab-pilots-portable-balance-equipment&catid=191:news&Itemid=202](http://mcmhospital.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=642:somesville-rehab-pilots-portable-balance-equipment&catid=191:news&Itemid=202)