



## **Acute Rehab Unit**

When Dan Norris awoke on May 4, he knew something was wrong. He couldn't walk, couldn't use the right side of his body, and he couldn't talk to his wife to tell her what was going on. Norris was having a stroke.

"Every time I tried to talk it was just a bunch of jibber that came out," Norris recalled.

The sixty eight year old was rushed to the emergency room, where they sent him by ambulance to the Iowa City hospital. He spent a few days there, and then was transferred home to Ottumwa Regional Health Center (ORHC).

"We chose ORHC first and I didn't even know anything about it. I could come home and be fifteen miles away. Once I got started with the people, I was so glad I did. It was a big reward."

During Norris' stay at ORHC, he was in the Acute Rehabilitation Unit, where he underwent therapy three days a week. "It makes you humble not being able to do stuff a one- year- old can do," Norris shared.

In speech therapy, the therapist helped Norris' recover his ability to communicate effectively after his stroke. She also helped him conquer his biggest challenge, which was swallowing.

"I couldn't eat, and she just kept working with me. It was amazing how fast it all came back," Norris told.

In occupational Therapy, Norris worked on things that seemed simple, but weren't for him. "I thought there was no way I could do this, but in a week or so I was doing it."

In physical therapy, Norris got to see progression from the day before. "When I finally got to do something I had been re-learning, the staff was as happy as I was. They made me feel like a family member, a part of the team," Norris explained. "Every time I think of Ottumwa Regional, I think of the staff. They still keep in touch with me after all of this time. Once you're done, they don't forget you, and that means a lot."

Norris is now back at home with his wife and dog. He spends his days fishing, planting flowers, tending to his vegetable garden, and canning.

"I am now fully done with rehab. When I first had my stroke I couldn't move my right hand, right arm or right leg. I couldn't eat, swallow, or talk. All I could see were many obstacles that I was going to have to overcome. Now I am back to moving my fingers, arm, and leg. I can talk, swallow, and I don't walk with a limp. I am so happy where I am now."