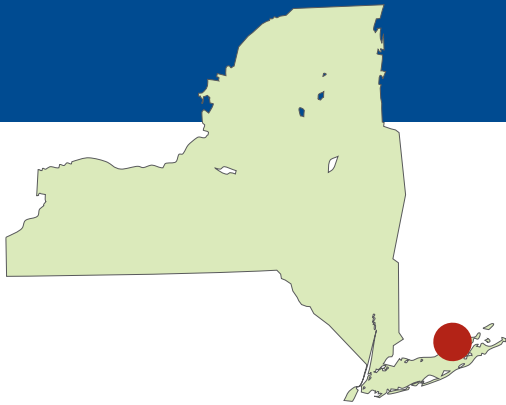


T-Golf System

Northport, New York



This adaptive golf program makes it possible for Veterans of any age—with or without disability, or experience playing golf—to take part in golf clinics and play the game of golf. Through participation in the clinics, Veterans can benefit physically and emotionally, and gain self-confidence and a sense of pride in personal achievement.

The T-Golf equipment and supplies are self-contained and ready for implementation of an adaptive golf program for geriatric and physically challenged Veterans. The program is a developmental tool that immediately builds eye–hand coordination and teaches proper balance and weight shift. Participants establish upper and lower body connection and progressively establish spine angle (bending at the waist).

About the Project

At the suggestion of a staff member who attended a workshop on the T-Golf Program, a formal full-day certification course was offered to the Recreation Therapists and the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service employees at the local and VISN levels.

T-Golf uses a graduated tee system, which places the ball closer to eye level in a more natural position for hitting. The tees progressively build spine angle.

The hitting area of the club is more than twice normal size.

The club is shorter, which reduces the swing arc and makes the club easier to control.

T-Golf can be used indoors or out, with individuals or groups, seated or standing.

Users are encouraged to progress at their own pace, depending on their individual athleticism.

Presentation of the T-Golf instructional DVD was instrumental in highlighting the adaptive equipment and its simplicity and user-friendliness. Scheduled T-Golf Clinic sessions are held at the Community Living Centers (CLCs). The interest and participation of Veterans has increased steadily since the program began.

Impact of Project

T-Golf allows everyone, from beginner to expert, to play at a similar level. During the opening event competition of the “Salute to Wellness Program,” 12 Veterans were placed in two divisions: Wheelchair and Open. Each patient was given 10 shots to hit a target, and the player in each division who hit the ball closest to the target was the winner. By using this system, the Veterans learned proper body mechanics and swinging skills.

The adaptive golf program will provide regular and ongoing exercise, increased range of motion, an emphasis on health and wellness, and achievable goals. This new treatment modality enables clinicians to customize interventions based on individual progress, level of ability, cognition, and pace. Because the game is so easy

“I can’t believe I won and I never played golf before in my life.” —Veteran



Patrick Campbell, Recreation Therapist, is demonstrating the accessibility to using the T-Golf System from a seated position in a wheelchair.

to play, potential users are encouraged to try it. Recreational therapists, for example, will find that any patient can play golf. Goals for physical, cognitive, and social well-being include:

- ★ Providing patients with adaptive equipment to learn or continue to play golf.
- ★ Increasing participation in golf clinics.
- ★ Quickly establishing the fun of hitting a golf ball.
- ★ Immediately building eye–hand coordination.
- ★ Increasing patients’ physical activity and socialization with peers.

Key Challenges

The timing of the purchase of the equipment to coincide with the outdoor golf season was a challenge. The complexity of the VA fiscal process to create a new vendor was unanticipated, and extended the time needed to place the order. Once the new vendor was established, however, ordering of initial and additional equipment has not been difficult.

Although a winter golf clinic was planned, finding adequate indoor space has proved a challenge, because the gymnasium is under construction. Another large indoor space is available, but using it would require moving and assembling the equipment for each session.

Next Steps

In the future, formal programs for both indoor and outdoor T-Golf clinics are planned. In addition, a 9-hole golf course already exists on the medical center grounds, and expansion of the program to that facility is under consideration.

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A Community Living Center resident accepted the invitation to be a T-Golf participant in the clinic. He not only attended the session, he is a regular participant in the golf clinics. —Staff