

NEWS RELEASE



For more information, contact:
Gail Wade
252 535-8111
gwade@halifaxrhc.org

For Immediate Release

NEW THERAPY AT HALIFAX REGIONAL ADVANCES TREATMENT FOR SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC (August 25, 2011)--Speech therapists at Halifax Regional now are using the latest technology to treat patients having difficulty swallowing.

Called VitalStim Therapy, the technology is an external electrical stimulation applied to the neck.

“The therapy stimulates the nerves and muscles, helping patients to re-learn how to swallow,” said Brandi Ross, manager of therapy services at Halifax Regional. “The result is our patients recover from their swallowing difficulty much faster.” People who have suffered from stroke or had throat surgery often have difficulty swallowing. Difficulty swallowing impacts as many as 15 million Americans.

“VitalStim has been found to be safe and effective for patients,” Ross says, “and helps patients achieve sustained improvement and long term results.”

Melissa Blanks is a Certified Speech Language Pathologist who treats patients. “VitalStim Therapy represents a significant savings by reducing the burden of feeding tubes and improving patient outcomes,” she says.

Blanks earned her Master’s degree in communication sciences and disorders at Western Carolina University. Her undergraduate degree is in rehab services from East Carolina. She is a native of Columbus County.

Halifax Regional is the only healthcare provider in the area offering the VitalStim Therapy on an outpatient basis. The therapy office is located at 120 Professional Drive in Roanoke Rapids.

Patients need a referral from their physician to receive the therapy, which generally is covered by insurance. Call 252- 535-8268 for information.

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.