FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Patient to be Discharged from Burke Rehabilitation Hospital with ReWalk Robotic Exoskeleton Device
- Burke to successfully discharge first patient with ReWalk device in region-

White Plains, NY, (December 14, 2017) – Burke Rehabilitation Hospital has announced it will discharge a patient with a ReWalk robotic exoskeleton device on Wednesday, December 20, 2017 at Noon. This will be the first discharge home of a patient in the region with the robotic device—a wearable exoskeleton that provides powered hip and knee motion to enable the individual to stand upright, walk and turn. This pivotal event in rehabilitative medicine will take place at Burke’s main lobby (Wood Building) at 785 Mamaroneck Avenue in White Plains, NY.

Rusty is a 39-year-old Slovakian-born patient who was employed in New York as a construction worker. In 2008, his entire life changed in a split second when he fell from the roof of a house approximately 32 feet high, and the fall caused a spinal cord injury that left him paralyzed from the waist down. Post-injury, Rusty was involved in various therapies, interventions and treatments at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital.

Burke’s expert therapists work closely with patients to evaluate and treat on a case-by-case basis. Because of this individualized approach, his therapist, Glenda Rosado, DPT, was able to identify that he was a candidate for robotics. With a ReWalk robotic exoskeleton device as the goal, Rusty and his therapist worked on developing his upper body strength, flexibility and ability to stand upright.

“Rusty’s rehabilitation journey exemplifies Burke’s goal of getting patients back to their maximum level of recovery and independence,” said Jeffrey Menkes, Burke’s President and CEO.
The ReWalk is a wearable robotic device which allows an individual with spinal cord injury that prevents them from walking on their own to be able to stand and walk. ReWalk offers devices for the rehabilitative and home setting—allowing qualifying individuals to use a device in their home and community.

With recommendations from the Burke team in collaboration with Rusty’s physician, his insurance approved the device that would alter his future. He then began the process of learning the basic and advanced skills required to ultimately take his ReWalk device home.

According to Rusty, “When I was first injured, I held on to hope that someday there would be a way for me to walk again. When the ReWalk technology became available and I learned that I could possibly walk with it, I knew this was my chance. Walking with the device has allowed me to regain sensation in muscles in my body that I have not felt since before my accident. This has motivated me to continue to work at home, with a goal of walking 1-2 hours a day in it.”

His rehabilitation process included learning to put on and remove, as well as stop and start the ReWalk, stand and sit independently, walk with supervision and navigate up and down inclines and through simulated household spaces.

Rusty also walked over various indoor and outdoor surfaces, including Burke’s rubberized track, and he will be cooking his first meal while standing at Burke before discharge. All of this therapy and training is essential to his gaining independence as he moves home with his ReWalk device. His companion has also been provided extensive education and training, and will have to demonstrate particular knowledge and skills before Rusty can go home.

“Working with Rusty over the past two years has been a transforming experience for both of us. We were able to improve his quality of life by changing his perspective from sitting in a chair looking up at the world to once again being able to stand and see it on his own two feet, something he had not been able to do in the last nine years,” said Rosado.

As a pioneer in rehabilitation medicine for more than 100 years, Burke remains at the forefront by incorporating cutting-edge technology during patients’ rehabilitation journeys. Rusty’s story is one chapter in a long legacy of Burke getting patients back to the lives they love.
Burke Rehabilitation Hospital is a not-for-profit, acute rehabilitation hospital in White Plains, NY. Founded in 1915 through an endowment from philanthropist John Masterson Burke, it is the only hospital in Westchester County dedicated solely to adult rehabilitation medicine. As of 2016, the hospital is now a part of the Montefiore Health System, Inc. Burke offers both inpatient and outpatient programs for those who have experienced a disabling illness, traumatic injury or surgery. For additional information, please visit burke.org.

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