

The Irwin Rehabilitation Center is located at Charles Cole Memorial Hospital in Coudersport, PA. Those visiting the center should use the west driveway entrance from East Second Street/Route 6.

Your appointment time

date _____

time _____

If you have any questions or need to reschedule, please call 814/274-6180.



BIG CITY QUALITY
HOMETOWN CARE

Vision
Independence



CHARLES
COLE MEMORIAL
HOSPITAL
REGIONAL MEDICAL CARE

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Severe vision loss is an event that everyone fears and there is no disputing that it will significantly affect a person's ability to function. However, it does not necessarily mean that patients cannot do those things they enjoy most.

Our Mission

The Vision Independence Program at Charles Cole Memorial Hospital helps patients of all ages with visual impairments including age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, albinism, and retinal detachments.

The program teaches patients to perform daily activities using alternative methods and equipment to maximize usable vision. Anyone with vision loss that cannot be restored through traditional methods, such as eye glasses or surgery, would benefit from the program. The program is led by an optometrist who works closely with the patient's eye doctor to ensure successful outcomes.

Our Approach

We use the glass is half full approach to vision rehabilitation. Instead of focusing on what's wrong with a patient or how much vision a patient has lost, we look at what visual assets a patient still has left and how we can use those assets to help patients perform tasks they love or need to do.

Causes of Vision Loss

The leading causes of vision loss in our area are macular degeneration and retinal complications from diabetes.

Macular degeneration is caused by damage to the retinal pigment epithelial cells in the eye. These are the cells that absorb excess ultraviolet or UV light that enters the eye and provide nutrients to the cells that do the seeing in the eye. Risk factors for macular degeneration include heredity, smoking, UV light exposure, cardiovascular disease, and race (Caucasians have lower pigment levels and thus are at greater risk than others). To lower the risk of getting macular degeneration, patients should eat a balanced diet, exercise, stop smoking, and be sure eyeglasses/sunglasses protect against UV light. Finally, increasing the intake of antioxidant vitamins like A, C, and E, and antioxidant minerals like iron, zinc, and copper, are also believed to protect against macular degeneration.

For those with diabetes, the best way to avoid retinal complications is to keep blood sugar under control.

Setting Goals

Once a person has lost vision, the Vision Independence Program at Charles Cole Memorial Hospital will identify a patient's goals. Goals include regaining the ability to read, watch TV, watch birds/wildlife in the backyard, or read music to sing or play in the church choir.

Adaptive Devices

We work with patients to determine which optical or non-optical adaptive aids best help them to accomplish their goals. These may be simple optical devices like a bifocal or magnifying glass. We also have more complex equipment like closed circuit televisions which allow us to achieve up to 56x magnification without losing optical quality like we do with magnifiers. This is done through the use of a camera and monitor system. Finally, we have non-optical devices as well. These include liquid level indicators, large print playing cards, and check and letter writing guides. After selecting the appropriate adaptive device, our occupational therapists train patients to use the equipment and teach techniques to help them get the best possible performance out of their vision.

Contact us

Appointments can be scheduled by calling 814/274-6180.