

# Patients Get Their Lives Back via Winthrop's Movement Disorders Program

For 20 years, 77-year-old Anne Marino of Northport, NY, suffered from a rare neurological condition known as cervical torticollis, causing her head to shake and twist to the right.

"I sought treatment at four major hospitals, desperate for relief," explained Mrs. Marino. "Each one spent months trying to help, but the spasms always came back."



Then Mrs. Marino heard that Winthrop-University Hospital was successfully treating Parkinson's disease and other movement related disorders with an advanced surgical procedure known as Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS).

DBS delivers electrical stimulation to targeted regions deep within the brain – such as the thalamus, sub thalamic nucleus, and globus pallidus – that control movement-related communication. Following DBS, many patients experience enhanced motor performance and quality of life, and, in some cases, marked reductions in medication.

"Deep Brain Stimulation is an exciting and innovative technology that allows us to modulate the neurocircuitry of the brain and achieve great results with low risk," said neurosurgeon Brian J. Snyder, MD, who is among the physicians at Winthrop providing a full range of therapies to patients with movement disorders.

DBS is typically performed in two stages. The first stage involves identifying the areas within the brain that require treatment with the assistance of computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and an advanced technique called microelectrode recording (MER). Fine microelectrodes are advanced through the patient's brain to "listen" to the cells in the region and identify the target location – typically about the size of an almond deep inside of the brain. Electricity may be placed through the electrodes to observe its effects and map the area. When the proper area is identified, the DBS electrode is placed in this region.

Not every patient is a candidate for DBS. All patients at Winthrop are thoroughly evaluated by their medical management team to determine the best course of treatment.

After meeting with Nora L. Chan, MD, Director of the Movement Disorders Program at Winthrop,

who is fellowship trained in the diagnosis and treatment of movement disorders and is an expert in the use of DBS for select patients, Mrs. Marino felt confident that undergoing DBS at Winthrop was the right option for her.

“They wanted so much to help me,” she said. “And I trusted them.”

Dr. Snyder performed Mrs. Marino’s DBS surgery in April. Though her recovery took some time, she gradually began to notice less movement in her head and neck. One evening this past summer as she was preparing dinner, Mrs. Marino realized her head was steady and straight.

“It was a miracle!” said Mrs. Marino.

“I am so happy to finally be able to live my life!” Seventy-two-year-old Mary Clark\* of Huntington, NY, is also deeply grateful for the relief she’s experienced as a result of DBS and the outstanding care that she recently received at Winthrop.

For more than 12 years, Mrs. Clark suffered from essential tremor – a common but sometimes debilitating disorder of the nervous system – which caused her to experience uncontrollable shaking in both of her hands. Though she tried medication therapy for relief, it left her weak and still suffering with symptoms.

In fact, the tremors had gotten so bad that Mrs. Clark became limited in what she could physically do and even eat.

Desperate for improvement, she too turned to Winthrop for help.

Mrs. Clark underwent DBS – initially to treat the tremors in her right hand – and just recently, to treat her left.

Today, she is enjoying the sense of freedom that comes with being able to do some of the simple things in life – things that many people take for granted.

“Now, I can garden, write and even cut my own meat!” she said recently.

The effects of Parkinson’s disease and other movement-related disorders, including dystonias, Tourette’s syndrome and essential tremor can be debilitating.

Winthrop-University Hospital’s Movement Disorders Program offers the most advanced care and treatment options for patients suffering with these and other conditions.

For more information on Winthrop’s Movement Disorders Program or DBS, visit [www.winthrop.org](http://www.winthrop.org) or call 1-866-WINTHROP.

\*Patient’s name has been changed at her request to protect her privacy.