



KARY SHEPPARD 2017

Research with a Heart

Kary Sheppard 2017 began graduate studies at the University of Minnesota in July.



Cardiac rehab is a team effort designed around a patient's medical needs. At RiverView Health in Crookston, cardiac rehab takes place in three phases: inpatient, monitored outpatient, and maintenance. Often when a patient moves from monitored outpatient to maintenance, they continue to follow the individual exercise program and RiverView staff help them manage it.

Research by recent graduate Kary Sheppard 2017, an exercise science and wellness major, took a look at a group of cardiac patients paired with a trained University of Minnesota Crookston student to continue their maintenance work at the wellness center on campus. Her research, inspired by a program at Grand Itasca Physical Therapy in Grand Rapids, Minn., worked with patients interested in continuing their exercise program in collaboration with the experts at RiverView Health.

Sheppard has always been interested in the medical field and the concept of being physically and emotionally well is something she says is worth learning.



Working with cardiac rehab patients was the focus of Sheppard's research in the honors program.

The Grand Rapids, Minn., native spent eight weeks in Dublin, Ireland, in 2016 interning at a physical therapy outpatient clinic, and she has shadowed a number of times at RiverView as well as Grand Itasca Physical Therapy. Shadowing gave her valuable experience and confirmed her desire to study in the field.

Her favorite part about the U of M Crookston is the many opportunities she has had in the classroom and abroad. "I've been lucky enough to pursue many of my interests and goals throughout my time on campus," Sheppard says. Her future plans include attending graduate school in physical therapy and using it to help others.

She has firsthand experience with the benefits of physical therapy as a result of her personal sport's related injuries and says her physical therapy experience changed her life. "I have had a number of family members involved in cardiac rehab and understanding the benefits of physical activity has something of a reverse domino effect," Sheppard says. "It builds a positive attitude, develops better eating and exercise habits, and relieves stress, which in turn, lead to a healthier life for the individual.

"Before I began this research project with RiverView, I did not have much experience in the area of cardiac rehab," she explains. "I have learned an incredible amount about this

area and broadened my knowledge in a real way."

As the semester ended, Sheppard reviewed the outcomes of this pilot program with her honors committee including Assistant Professor Danielle Johannesen, Associate Professor Brian Dingmann, and RiverView Director of Rehab Services Crystal Maruska. Together they will determine what the future might hold for this initial collaboration.

Sheppard's research could lead to a possible practicum or internship for students with an interest in medicine or therapy or those majoring in exercise science and wellness. No matter what the future holds for undergraduates at the U of M Crookston, the research Sheppard developed will help her as she prepares for graduate school and her future as a physical therapist.

