“You’re going to be okay” are the words that gave Grace Knighton the confidence and courage to begin her journey back to health and independence following a major stroke in April 2010.

“I felt I was having a really bad dream when I couldn’t move my right arm or leg,” Grace says. “That’s when Dr. Esmaeili told me I would be all right. Those words were very important to me and helped me move forward.”

Keyvan Esmaeili, M.D., is the Medical Director of Palomar Medical Center’s (PMC) Acute Rehabilitation Unit. He is board-certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and supervises a multi-disciplinary team of rehabilitation professionals who concentrate their expertise on maximizing physical and cognitive functioning with the goal of returning patients to their physical best following a stroke, major trauma or illness.

When it comes to meeting that goal with stroke patients, the numbers speak loudly: more than 85 percent of all stroke patients resume independent living at home after being treated in PMC’s Acute Rehabilitation Unit (ARU). Another indicator of success is that stroke patients discharged from the ARU are able to perform a range of daily lifestyle activities at higher than expected levels. These functional improvement measures include upper and lower body dressing, toileting, bladder management, locomotion and problem solving.

The ARU is accredited by CARF, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, a nonprofit organization that sets international standards of care for quality improvement. In 2011, the ARU also received the CARF Stroke Specialty Program certificate, recognizing that the ARU has met additional quality standards such as patient education and prevention that promote independent life following a stroke.

“This double recognition from CARF confirms that the ARU provides the Gold Standard of rehabilitation care,” says Jill Biggane, RN, BSN, CCM, Program Director of ARU.

For more information about Palomar Health rehabilitation services, visit www.PalomarHealth.org.