



**Bob Riley**  
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of  
**REHABILITATION SERVICES**



**Steve Shivers**  
COMMISSIONER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Kathleen McGehee  
334-293-7500 or 1-800-441-7607

## **Marshall County boy defies odds, begins walking**

UNION GROVE – Just after Marshall County resident Patrick Wilbanks was born, he had a stroke. The resulting damage left the little boy with cerebral palsy.

The doctors' predictions were grim: that Patrick would never walk.

Patrick has since turned 5 years old and – disregarding his physicians' prognosis – recently took his first steps.

"He has made phenomenal progress," said Barbara Elston, his care coordinator with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, "especially since his prognosis was that the likelihood of him walking was slim."

Patrick began receiving services through the department's Alabama Early Intervention System ( EI ) when he was 10 months old. EI , which serves babies and toddlers with developmental delays up to 3 years old, arranged for him to receive physical therapy at Therapy Plus.

When he aged out of EI , he was referred to the department's Children's Rehabilitation Service ( CRS ) division, which serves youth from birth to 21 years old with disabilities.

With CRS , Patrick regularly attended two clinics. He went to feeding clinic to help with eating difficulties and orthopedic clinic. Elston became his care coordinator, and he continued to receive PT through Therapy Plus. It was at Therapy Plus that Patrick made his first steps and astonished everyone.

"Everyone was extremely excited," Elston said. "He is now walking more independently, without the assistance of anyone."