



# **AMH Wound Care Center goes out on a 'limb'**

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ALTON – Sept. 12, 2017, was a life-changing day that Bill Burton of East Alton will never forget. A limb-saving day, to be precise.

The date marked his initial visit to the Alton Memorial Hospital Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine Center, beginning the process to save his right leg from amputation.

A few months prior, the 74-year-old retired UPS driver had surgery to bypass a blocked artery in his leg and restore blood flow to his lower leg and foot. The femoral bypass surgery entailed a long incision, which wasn't healing. He eventually developed some scarring and an infection at the incision site, a common complication of the surgery. His BJC Home Health nurse, Angie Springman, initiated the referral to the AMH Wound Care Center.

"My wound really wasn't painful," says Burton. "But my feet were numb, and also sensitive, if that makes sense. I'd broken my big toe (after the surgery) and didn't even know it."

Jana Lybarger, nurse manager of the AMH Wound Care Center, says the course of treatment for Burton's wound was hyperbaric oxygen treatments (HBO). Those treatments were started just two days after his first visit to treat the failed graft.

"HBO is a therapy used in conjunction with weekly wound care visits to help heal wounds," says Lybarger.

In the hyperbaric chamber, the patient breathes in 100 percent pressurized oxygen for two hours.

"The normal air we breathe is 21 percent oxygen," Lybarger said. "Wounds will not heal without the right components, and oxygen is a huge healing component. The 100 percent oxygen helps promote healing, can help develop new blood vessels that get the oxygen to the wound, and causes the plasma to carry oxygen."

The leg wound was deemed officially healed in November, but the broken toe and poor circulation presented other issues. The medication that Burton takes for rheumatoid arthritis was affecting his ability to heal. He subsequently developed wounds and a bone infection, called osteomyelitis.

"Through his course of treatment, it was discussed that he may lose his toes that had become infected," said Lybarger. "He was started on intravenous antibiotics, and then was treated in HBO again for osteomyelitis that had failed to respond to antibiotics. He started his second round of HBO in February."

. "I was concerned Bill was going to lose a toe," said Valinda Allen, MD, the medical director of the Wound Care Center. "Bill is very independent and self-reliant. He really

wanted to play golf again and was determined to get well and do whatever it takes to get better.”

Officially discharged May 23 from treatment, Burton walks with a cane, which he readily admits he prefers to the alternative.

“I didn’t lose my leg and I didn’t lose my toes because of the excellent care I received at the Wound Care Center,” he says. “They were genuinely concerned about my well-being. I knew Dr. Allen truly cared about me. The people there are fantastic.”

He’d looks forward to eventually playing a round of golf, and even doesn’t mind waiting until it’s a bit cooler outside since he hasn’t played since before his surgery more than a year ago.

“I don’t think I’ll play as good as I used to,” Burton said.

But that’s just fine by him.

The Alton Memorial Hospital Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine Center, a member of the Healogics network, offers advanced therapies, such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy, to patients suffering from chronic, non-healing wounds. For information on the AMH Wound Care Center or to schedule an appointment with a wound care specialist, call **618-433-7066**.