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Gaining Back Independence

When Ronald Champagne, 69, suffered cardiac arrest in January 2011, he suffered anoxia (lack of oxygen to the brain). He was lucky, though. It happened at his gym where he was working out, and people were there to help him. He received emergency treatment and was rushed to Beebe Medical Center where he had emergency open-heart surgery.

The successful electrical engineer and entrepreneur woke up to find that his brain wasn’t working the same way. “I didn’t know how to talk anymore,” he says, exhibiting an air of confidence and wit one might not expect from someone who had been so disabled just one year before.

Ron Champagne also received treatment at the Washington Hospital Center and later began speech-language therapy and occupational therapy at Beebe Health Campus.

“When he came home, he didn’t recognize our house,” his wife Sheila recalled. “He had to learn our address and telephone number again.”

Today, Ron credits the support of his wife and good friends, the emergency responders, the physicians and medical staff, and the professionals at Beebe’s rehabilitation Services for giving him back his life.

“When you go through something like this, the family members also have to be involved,” Sheila Champagne says. “the rehab team treated us as a family, and I did everything I could.”

“The rehab people were good,” Ron Champagne says. “And, Holly (Sullivan) figured out how my brain works.”

Holly Sullivan, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, a speech-language pathologist at Beebe Medical Center, worked closely with Ron and likened the brain to a computer. “When cardiac arrest or stroke occurs, brain information becomes scrambled and inaccessible,” she says. “My job is to put the words back. It is hard for the patient because he or she doesn’t understand why the words aren’t there.”

Ron Champagne also worked with occupational therapist Alice Workman, OTR/L, CLT, and occupational therapist assistant Barb Martin, COTA. Ron experienced weakness in one arm and hand after suffering cardiac arrest. Then a year later, in an accident, he fell and broke his hand and returned to Alice for therapy again. This time, he went to get help with his hand’s mobility.

“These are two different aspects of occupational therapy,” Alice explains. “In one, he worked to regain function after the arm and hand had become weakened. Most recently, he worked to regain mobility. Without occupational therapy, the hand could forever be stiff and lack range of motion, which would interfere with the performance of daily activities.”

Lois Blackburn, at 54, suffered several strokes that left her unable to speak and hard to walk. Speech-language pathologist Holly Sullivan, physical therapist Don Kung.
Jo-anne Young, left, who is recovering from a stroke, gets her exercise by walking at Prime Hook Nature Preserve with her partner Evelyn Bryant.

A Better Way of Breathing

Norbori resident Gregory Gagnon, 55, knows how difficult it is to go about his daily life suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). He is short of breath and doesn’t have much energy. Over time, he has begun to do fewer and fewer activities that he used to enjoy.

Though there is no cure for this lung disease, Gagnon’s wife MaryKate is determined to help him feel better and improve his quality of life. That’s why she encouraged him in January to participate in Beebe Medical Center’s new pilot Pulmonary Rehab program, which is part of Pulmonary Services.

“I am already feeling better,” Gagnon said in February. “The program is building up my stamina and MaryKate is keeping me motivated.”

MaryKate drives Greg to Beebe Medical Center twice a week, where he works with respiratory therapist Kelly Thompson, RRT, and exercise physiologist Pam Jacobson Loue, RRT. “Exercise is necessary to gain muscle strength, which in turn gives Greg more stamina,” says Pam Jacobson Loue. COPD patients have to exercise cautiously. If a COPD patient exercises too aggressively, the amount of oxygen in the blood actually decreases, rather than increasing like it would with healthy lungs.

In Beebe’s Pulmonary Rehab room, specialized equipment is used to monitor Greg’s heart rate and the level of oxygen in his blood while he exercises under Pam Jacobson’s watchful eye. Greg continues to use oxygen, which Pam can increase if necessary so Greg can continue to gain therapeutic value from his workouts. Blood pressure also is monitored, and blood glucose is monitored in necessary.

Good nutrition also is critical to Greg, who uses additional calories just to breathe. Pam and Kelly also have been teaching Greg and MaryKate diet tips and guidance in proper nutrition that will support good overall lung health.

“People with COPD have been proven to prevent and decrease illnesses and hospitalizations,” said Pam. As part of the Pulmonary Rehab program, a team of doctors and respiratory therapists creates a plan tailored to each patient. Besides exercise training and nutrition, it includes education on how to manage the chronic disease, energy-conserving tips, and breathing strategies.

Pulmonary Rehab focuses on increasing overall quality of life and in turn reduces the number of hospital visits. The more education and knowledge patients have, the better their quality of life can be. In addition to education in the Pulmonary Rehab program, patients are encouraged to take part in the Beebe-sponsored Better Breathers Support Group.

LymPhEdema ProGram

The Lymphedema Management Program is also offered through Beebe Rehabilitation Services. Certified lymphedema specialists Alice Wolfsen and Camilla Carter offer help for people who have lymphedema or who are at risk for developing it. For more information, contact the Rehabilitation Services at 18041 John J. Williams Highway in Rehoboth Beach at (302) 445-3010, ext. 2424.

Beebe’s Better Breathers Support Group

Each month members of our Pulmonary Team hold a support group session dedicated to improving community health awareness and improving the lives of patients with problematic breathing conditions.

Meets: 3rd Wednesday of the month
Time: 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Where: McCurry Conference Center Medical Arts Building at the Beebe Health Campus—John J. Williams Highway, Route 24, Rehoboth

For further information please contact Andi Doumas, Kathi Dayton, or Joann Hoffman at (302) 445-3298.

Pulmonary Health At The Beebe Medical Center

Beebe’s Pulmonary Care Team is a three-board certified pulmonologists and 24 respiratory therapists, many with advanced clinical training, who work together to treat patients with breathing problems associated with conditions like COPD, cystic fibrosis, pulmonary hypertension, post-op lung reduction, and more. Respiratory therapists are members of multidisciplinary teams in the hospital and take part in the following medical services:

• Array management for hospitalized patients
• Pulmonary function testing (PFT)
• Electromyography (EMG)
• Electromyography (EEG)
• Endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS)
LIFE-SAVING CARDIAC PROCEDURES

Jesse H. Jones is the Publisher/Publisher Emeritus of The Medical Center News.

For more information, please visit our website at MedicalCenterNews.com

LIFE-SAVING CARDIAC PROCEDURES

What can you do?

• A condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating.
• Most people die within minutes.
• Ventricular fibrillation (an irregular heartbeat in the lower chambers) causes most cases of sudden cardiac arrest.

Signs

• Loss of consciousness
• No heartbeat/pulse can be felt

What can you do?

• Immediately start CPR to restore blood flow (you do not have to do mouth-to-mouth resuscitation) and continue until paramedics arrive.
• Use an automated external defibrillator (AED) to regulate heart rhythm. These can be used by untrained bystanders and are available in many public places. They have easy-to-follow directions.

Source: National Institutes of Health http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/
Bob Lowes saw that his wife Marion just didn’t look right. “Her color was bad and her eyes were droopy,” he recalls. “She just wasn’t herself.”

Marion, 74, would get so dizzy that she thought she was going to pass out. She had some pain and some palpitations in her heart. “I had a stent in my heart about a year before,” she says. “They say my artery was 99 percent blocked. Dr. Freih, who put in the stent, was wonderful.”

Beebe Medical Center interventional cardiologist Mouhanad Freih, MD, had inserted a stent into one of Marion’s coronary arteries, which restored blood flow to her heart. But a year later, something else was wrong with her heart.

Dr. Freih diagnosed Marion with atrial fibrillation (A-fib), the most common heart rhythm disorder (cardiac arrhythmia), which affects more than 2.5 million Americans. A-fib occurs when diseased tissue in the left upper chamber of the heart (left atrium) fires very rapidly, clashing electrical impulses, thus interfering with what should be a healthy heartbeat. A-fib is well known to increase the risk of heart attack, blood clots, heart failure and stroke. Medications are often used initially to regulate heart rhythm and prevent A-fib recurrence.

“Even my medicine didn’t help,” she says. Dr. Freih referred Marion to Beebe Medical Center electrophysiologist Firas El-Sabbagh, MD, for a consultation. Electrophysiologists are cardiologists with specialized advanced training in treating different electrical disorders of the heart. Since medication was not helping Marion, on January 24, Dr. El-Sabbagh performed an ablation, a procedure that is done in the hospital’s Electrophysiology (EP) Lab. Ablation is the removal or melting away of unwanted tissue using a catheter that delivers radiofrequency energy around the pulmonary veins, which are the veins that bring clean blood from the lungs back to the left atrium. The procedure was performed under conscious sedation, so Marion was arousable throughout the procedure. Dr. El-Sabbagh used a 3-D mapping system, a very advanced technology that allowed him to make an electro-anatomic map (real-time geometry) of the heart, displayed on a monitor in the EP Lab, guiding him as he worked and minimizing the use of radiation.

Marion’s case was a complex one where Dr. El-Sabbagh had to thread the cardiac catheters through Marion’s septum (wall between upper chambers), a procedure termed “transseptal access.” Marion was able to walk about six hours after the procedure. Marion quickly returned to her old self, both she and Bob will attest. “What a difference. We are back to enjoying life,” she says. Both retirees, the Georgetown couple stays busy visiting with their 12 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren, and hanging out with friends at the Moose Lodge, the Elk’s, and the American Legion Hall on Route 24.

“We are very proud to offer a variety of highly specialized procedures for treating heart rhythm problems to our community,” states Georges Daht, MD, Chief of Cardiology. “As we acquired advanced EP skills and expertise and cutting-edge technology, patients with all different types of arrhythmias can now be treated at Beebe.”

**ELECTROPHYSIOLOGY SERVICES**

As an integral part of Cardiac and Vascular Services, comprehensive Electrophysiology (EP) Services offers patients treatment options for irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia) and other electrical disorders of the heart such as:

- Atrial fibrillation
- Atrial flutter
- Atrial tachycardia
- Supraventricular tachycardia (SVT)
- Ventricular tachycardia

Beebe’s electrophysiology Team consists of two Board Certified electrophysiologists (cardiologists who spend two extra years of specializing in the electrical disorders of the heart) and specially trained nurses and technologists. Procedures are performed in the Electrophysiology Lab.

**Comprehensive services include:**

- Diagnostic services:
  - Carotid: vascular monitoring with 3-D patch (www.irhythmtech.com)
  - Holter monitoring
  - Electrocardiography
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of heart rhythm medications
- Invasive treatment:
  - Permanent implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICD), and advanced devices for treating heart failure (cardiac resynchronization therapy—CRT)
  - Multisite catheter ablation to treat different types of cardiac arrhythmia with:
    - Use of intracardiac electroanatomic mapping system to deliver targeted therapy to the source of the irregular heartbeats

Marion and Bob Lowes enjoy dancing together. Marion says she is as good as new following her most recent heart procedure that stabilized her rhythm for the first time in 27 years.
Beebe CAREs is There When You Need Help

Like many people her age, Frances Beers, 83, struggles with several ailments. She has vascular disease, heart disease, and diabetes. Her eyesight isn’t good, and she often has pain in her stomach. However, she has managed pretty well in her own home with the help of her next-door neighbor and best friend Norma Hitchens. That is, until November 2012 when she was admitted to Beebe Medical Center in Lewes for an infection.

Then, on January 14, Norma found Frances passed out on the floor because her blood sugar had dropped so low that she became unconscious. The ambulance took Frances to Beebe Medical Center, where she stayed for five days. It was the second time in two months that she had to be admitted to the hospital.

At the hospital, Frances was referred to Beebe CAREs, a program run by Beebe’s Population Health Department to assist patients with chronic diseases who could benefit from additional resources during their transition out of the hospital. A nurse practitioner, a community and social services specialist, and registered nurses work together to help patients in the program to develop their need to successfully transition out of the hospital to improve long-term quality of life.

CAREs stands for Care coordination, Access and advocacy, Referral, and Empowerment. The program, headed up by Population Health Director Megan Williams, FNP-C, was launched in 2012 as a pilot. It proved to be so helpful that Beebe is expanding it. Beebe Medical Center’s program also has been gaining national attention through Williams’ participation in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Care About Your Care program, which is focused on helping people successfully transition from the hospital to the home setting.

Frances wants to stay in her home, and Beebe CAREs and program nurse Dianne Bane, RN, are helping her do that. Following Frances’ January hospital stay, Dianne has visited her at home and met with both her and Norma.

“Whatever I tried to do wasn’t working,” Jean says, describing a collection of prescribed medications she takes and certain diets she has tried to follow. “I just couldn’t get it under control!”

In a home visit, Dianne Bane helped Jean set up a schedule for her medications so that she was taking them throughout the day, rather than taking several different medications at one time. Dianne helped her develop a diet and learn how to reduce stress.

“She checks on me every week and has got me keeping a notebook,” Jean says, explaining that it has been difficult for her to admit to herself that she has a chronic illness that she has to manage for the rest of her life.

“I wasn’t mentally or emotionally handling sickness. I don’t see myself as a sick person,” she says. “I have to think about things differently. Dianne is helping me find the new me. I can’t tell you how wonderful her help has been. It really means something to me.”

Jean Eaton says she is learning how to enjoy life once again, thanks to her participation in the Beebe CAREs program.

Results of Beebe CAREs Pilot (from June to September 2012):

• 44% increase in quality of life
• 95% increase in transitional skills
• 49% reduction in readmissions
• 50% reduction in inpatient days

Beebe Medical Center / BeebeMed.org
**OUR VISION**

Our vision is for Sussex County to be one of the healthiest counties in the nation.

**OUR MISSION**

Beebe Medical Center’s charitable mission is to encourage healthy living, prevent illness, and restore optimal health with the people residing, working, or visiting the communities we serve.

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**INFORMATION FOR THE COMMUNITY**

**Co-pays to Be Collected**

Beebe Medical Center will require patients to pay their insurance co-pay, deductible and co-insurance balances when they visit the hospital and outpatient facilities across Sussex County, including Tunnell Cancer Center this month. Beebe is responding to the needs of a growing and changing demographic of patients who want to pay their co-pays and deductibles at the time of service. This is currently a common practice at physician offices and other hospitals throughout the country.

Patients will also have the opportunity to pay any outstanding balances at most Beebe locations and at all Beebe locations by December 2013.

Beebe currently collects co-payments upon discharge from the Emergency Department and will continue to do so. Patients may pay by cash, check, or credit card for their services. Beebe will continue to provide access to a Benefits/Financial Counselor for financial assistance to assist individuals who are unable to pay for their services.

Beebe will install a Patient Price Estimator by June 2013 that will provide cost transparency to patients by informing them of their financial responsibility, including co-payments, co-insurances, deductibles, and any self-pay amounts before and at the time of service.

“This will be a great patient satisfier. So many patients already pay their co-payments at their physician and dental offices. They have been requesting this from us and we are excited to be able to offer this option for our patients,” says Linda Yenchik, Patient Access Manager at Beebe.

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**You may qualify for a FREE screening for breast cancer!**

Contact Debbie Campbell, RN, Beebe’s Cancer Screening Nurse Navigator at (302) 645-3169. Breast Health Clinics* take place on the second Thursday of each month at Tunnell Cancer Center in Rehoboth Beach for those who do not have insurance, who are underinsured, or who cannot afford to pay. Health professionals administer all examinations and screenings. Appointments are required.

Patients may be eligible to get free transportation to and from their appointment.

Women should begin clinical breast exams every three years starting at age 20, then every year starting at age 40. All women should have annual mammograms beginning at age 40.

*This program is funded with a grant from the Philadelphia Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

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**BEST OF THE BEACH art AUCTION**

**24th BEEBEMEDICAL FOUNDATION**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2013 6:00 P.M.—11:00 P.M.**

- Entertainment by Love Seed Mama Jump
- Under the tent on the grounds of the Beebe Health Campus, Route 24, Rehoboth Beach
- For Auction, Underwriting, and Sponsorship opportunities, please call Beebe Medical Foundation at (302) 644-2900 or email bsalaman@bbmc.org.

Benefiting Beebe Medical Foundation and the Rehoboth Art League

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