

HEALTH CARE ENTREPRENEUR

Her goal: Accessible hyperbaric treatment

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INDUSTRIES & TAGS



John George Senior Reporter *Philadelphia Business Journal*

Victoria Bliss-Calkins has started her second Bucks County business, Oxygen Oasis Hyperbaric Wellness Center, with a goal of making hyperbaric oxygen therapy accessible to more patients.

What her company does: Provides hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT). The procedure involves placing patients in a chamber where the air pressure is about two-and-a-half times greater than the normal pressure in the atmosphere. Breathing pure oxygen under pressure allows a person's lungs to gather more oxygen than possible through normal breathing. The extra oxygen in the bloodstream is carried throughout the body – reaching damaged organs and tissues that previously lacked blood supply and oxygen.



[Enlarge](#)

Victoria Bliss-Calkins in front of the center's multiplace chamber, where up to eight... [more](#)

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What makes the Oxygen Oasis distinct: The center is the first freestanding HBOT facility in Pennsylvania with multiplace and monoplace hyperbaric chambers, according to Bliss-Calkins. In a monoplace chamber, the patient breathes 100 percent oxygen while lying down inside an enclosed tube. Multiplace chambers are larger where up to eight people can receive treatment while seated inside.

Why she decided to get into the hyperbaric oxygen therapy business: Bliss-Calkins' husband [Tom](#) and their daughter both benefited from HBOT. Her daughter received HBOT while in high school to accelerate her recovery from a soccer injury. Her husband received HBOT for delayed

radiation injuries that occurred after he underwent radiation treatment for stage-four squamous cell carcinoma in his tonsils. The treatment helped him regain flexibility in his neck and reduce the frequency of the muscle spasms he endured after his surgery.

Where she parts company with the FDA: The Food and Drug Administration has approved HBOT for about a dozen indications, Bliss-Calkins said, including soft tissue and chronic bone infections, compromised skin grafts and flaps, decompression sickness, carbon monoxide poisoning and burns. Government and private insurers only pay for treatments, which typically cost between \$140 and \$175 per session, that are approved by the FDA. Oxygen Oasis also provides for conditions treated internationally with HBOT — such as autism, cerebral palsy, stroke, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, multiple sclerosis, Lyme disease, fibromyalgia and migraines — where there is growing medical evidence from studies that show the therapy benefits patients.

What's next for Oxygen Oasis: Earlier this month, the Joint Commission, a nonprofit organization that accredits health care providers, conducted a two-day inspection of the center. The center hopes to receive Joint Commission accreditation within the next 30 days. Also in the works is a meeting with members of the NFL Alumni Association at the Langhorne center where Oxygen Oasis will talk about how HBOT can be used to treat post-concussion syndrome in football players.

CLOSER LOOK

Victoria Bliss-Calkins

Title: Owner, president and CEO

Company: Oxygen Oasis Hyperbaric Wellness Center

Location: Langhorne

Previously: Worked in international sales for companies including Technicolor and Ubee Interactive.

John George covers health care, biotech/pharmaceuticals and sports business.