

Nonprofit Funds Veteran's Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for Stroke Rehabilitation



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A stroke is a serious condition caused by a clot or hemorrhage of a blood vessel in the brain, causing inadequate blood flow and oxygenation to the tissues. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), strokes affect about 795,000 people in the United States each year.

Effects of stroke

Strokes can cause significant impairment in language, cognition, and motor skills, and effects can last for years. Depending on the extent and location of the stroke, symptoms of weakness, paralysis, visual disturbances, speech difficulties, and sometimes loss of consciousness or death can occur.

How can HBOT assist in stroke rehabilitation?

Traditional stroke rehabilitation options include physical, occupational, and speech therapy; but studies have shown that adding hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) can dramatically improve results even years after the stroke occurred.

The brain consumes 20% of the body's oxygen, but that is only enough oxygen to operate 5% to 10% of neurons at any one time. The regeneration process requires much more energy. The tenfold increase in oxygen levels during HBOT treatment supplies the necessary energy for rebuilding neuronal connections and stimulating inactive neurons to facilitate the healing process.

A recent study conducted in Tel Aviv showed significantly increased neuronal activity in post-stroke patients after a 2-month period of HBOT treatment compared to control periods of nontreatment. The results indicate that HBOT treatment can lead to significant improvement in brain function in post-stroke patients even at chronically late stages, helping neurons strengthen and build new connections in damaged regions. Patients experienced improvements such as a reversal of paralysis, increased sensation, and renewed use of language.

Although Medicare does not cover HBOT for stroke at this time, more studies are under way to prove the cost-effectiveness and incredible benefits of HBOT for stroke.

Testimonial: Kenneth Vann, U.S. Air Force

"I had a stroke in March

of 2010. The stroke was so severe that I was left paralyzed on the right side from the neck down. I also lost my speech. I went from being energetic and healthy to being totally disabled. This was devastating to me, but I was determined to get the most out of rehab. I also researched my condition to find other avenues of help. I first found out about hyperbaric oxygen therapy in January of 2011, but the closest clinic was in northern New Jersey, which was too far a commute every other day. I continued to check the research over the next four years, and I came across Oxygen Oasis Hyperbaric Wellness Center in July of 2015.

When I first came to Oxygen Oasis, I had severe deficits of the right hand and wrist. I could barely turn my wrist and had very little movement in my fingers. I also had moderate deficits in my right foot and ankle that relegated me to walking with a brace made for foot drop.

After my first 20 dives, I noticed improvement in my fingers, and I was able to turn my wrist. The next 20 dives showed an obvious improvement in my fingers and hand, as I was able to shake hands with people. This was something that I could not do

before. Unfortunately, there was very little improvement with my foot and ankle, as I am still wearing the brace, but I am hopeful that, with 40 more hyperbaric treatments, I will see great improvement in this area as well.

I want to thank Oxygen Oasis and Chambers for Hope for giving me the opportunity to repair my body, and I am truly grateful for the results that I received. You are doing a great service for our nation's veterans, and we all really do appreciate it. I am looking forward to returning to 'complete' the mission."

Financial assistance for HBOT treatment for veterans

Kenneth's treatment and all of the benefits he is now experiencing were made possible by the Chambers of Hope (CFH) organization. The North Carolina-based 501c3 nonprofit organization offers financial assistance to veterans and first responders seeking HBOT as a supplemental treatment to their existing medical protocol. The Chambers for Hope Network consists of quality HBOT clinics throughout the U.S.

Oxygen Oasis Hyperbaric Wellness Center, located in

Langhorne, PA, is a member of the Chambers for Hope Network and serves the Bucks County and surrounding (Mid-Atlantic) area.

Under the leadership of its owner, Victoria Bliss-Calkins, Oxygen Oasis obtained accreditation from the Joint Commission, meaning that Oxygen Oasis has met the highest standards for quality and safety of care. Physician oversight is one of the many requirements for admission to the Chambers for Hope Network. Medical Director, Benjamin Lam DO, FACOS, and his team (physicians Scott Rosenthal DO and Patrick Fall, DO) provide quality assessment and follow-up for all HBOT treatments.

Chambers for Hope helps fund HBOT treatments for veterans and first responders at Oxygen Oasis. For more information and to fill out an application, please visit: <http://www.chambersforhope.org/veterans--first-responders.html>.



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