

'It was 50-50 that I could lose my foot or leg.'

Thomas Sasso, an accountant from Revere, has seen the dramatic care the Center for Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine at Melrose-Wakefield Hospital (MWH) can provide. After snow shoveling, he noticed he had a blister on his toe that in a matter of days became irritated and infected. When it got worse, he went to the Emergency Department at MWH.

There he learned the infection was spreading and his medical team needed to take decisive action. Once Sasso's wound and infection were stabilized, he was sent to the Center for Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine.

"The staff there was tremendous," he recalls. "It was 50-50 that I could lose my foot or leg. The physicians and staff stayed with me through this ordeal. I can't sing their praises high enough. Without their intervention, I never would have made it."

Sasso did not lose his leg. With the care the Center provided, the infection cleared. He continues to go to the Center to make sure there are no further problems.

Hallmark Health System's (HHS) Center for Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine continues to produce dramatic cases where local patients finally find a solution to the frustration and limiting lifestyle they suffer from a wound that will not heal. The Center has set an impressive track record of providing highly-advanced care for chronic wounds including diabetic ulcers, venous and pressure ulcers as well as wounds caused by poor blood flow and other conditions.

The Center features two hyperbaric oxygen chambers. If a patient's wounds qualify for this type of treatment, the patient breathes 100 percent oxygen under pressure while resting comfortably inside a roomy, plexiglass chamber. This hyperbaric oxygen therapy increases the oxygen level in the bloodstream enhancing the body's natural healing.

Recently, new physicians have joined the team of medical specialists working at the Center. They include Mark Iafrati, MD, chief of vascular surgery at Tufts Medical Center, Jennifer Lane, MD, Kwandi Smith, MD and Drew Taft, MD. Working with Alfonso Serrano, MD, the Center's medical director, the team uses the latest treatment and therapies available to find the precise solution to treat wounds that will not heal.

The Center's medical team uses the latest advances in skin synthetics and other medical advances to encourage new skin growth. In each case, the care and treatment is a collaborative effort of the medical team to find the best solution for each patient. The team spends a great deal of time working with the patient to manage nutrition issues, physical therapy and other needs to improve the patient's quality of life.

For more information on the Center, visit www.hallmarkhealth.org and select "Programs."