

Now a member of



SULLIVAN JOURNAL

April 12, 2011

75¢

Tax
Included



www.sullivanjournal.com

MO-BAP opens Wound Care Center

Story and photos by Will Sites

SULLIVAN – Imagine a wound that never heals. For many people, the reality becomes a constant cycle of treatment and frustration. Until a few months ago, the best-case scenario may have necessitated lengthy out-of-town trips for treatment – or simply living with the pain and uncertainty.

But not anymore, says Ron Culbreath, program director of a new wound care treatment facility

located at Missouri Baptist Sullivan Hospital. “Any wound that is over four weeks old that is not healing is a chronic wound,” says Culbreath. “That’s the kind of wound we can treat at the Wound Care Center.” Opened in January of this year, the Wound Care Center specializes in comprehensive care of problem wounds by using up-to-date approaches in the science of wound care.

That may include hyperbaric oxygen therapy, a proven course of treatment for patients suffering from diabetic ulcers, traumatic wounds, surgical wounds, burns, pressure ulcers or other chronic, non-healing wounds.

“Every patient’s wound is unique,” Culbreath says. “We provide a thorough diagnostic exam to identify the type of wound and then chart a course of treatment



Blair Howard monitors a patient in a hyperbaric chamber.

WOUND page A3

Local

www.sullivanjournal.com

WOUND from A1

to effectuate the healing process.” The type of wound goes far beyond diabetes-related ulcers and other common types of difficult wounds. Certain diseases of the eye and even venomous animal bites can be effectively treated.

Treatment, he says, is on an outpatient basis, so interruption to the patient is held to a minimum. The Wound Care Center at

very positive.

Bob Deutsch is a believer. The Bourbon resident has suffered from a troublesome foot wound for several years. Since undergoing a series of two-hour hyperbaric oxygen treatments, Deutsch’s proof of healing is evident. “You can see the progress from when Bob started to now,” said Blair Howard, safety director and hyperbaric oxygen tech at the Wound Care Center, pointing to a series of photographs depicting Deutsch’s wound. The process and treatment is rather simple.

Patients are placed inside a glass hyperbaric chamber that is filled with pure oxygen and taken to about 2.5 atmospheres – or about 78 feet. Much like decompression chambers commonly associated with deep-sea divers, hyperbaric oxygen treatment is designed to accomplish three objectives.

“It stops infection, controls the edema (swelling), and actually grows new blood cells,” says Culbreath, noting that the science has been around for about 40 years. “It’s become a streamline medicine now because the results are simply incredible.” And needed across the area.

Research indicates that upwards of 2 percent of Americans will experience a chronic wound during their lifetime and approximately 6.5 million have chronic wounds at any given time. Until today, the nearest hyperbaric oxygen treatment facility meant a trip to St. Louis – for every treatment. At the Wound Care Center, patients can be referred by a physician or self-admit.

As for the experience, hyperbaric treatment is as painless as watching TV. The patient is comfortably placed into the glass chamber, remaining in contact with the technician via a phone/speaker system.

Facts

1-2 percent of population will experience chronic wound during lifetime
6.5 million people have chronic wounds

\$25 billion spent on chronic wound care

\$15.3 billion estimated expenditures on wound care products

40 million inpatient and 31.5 million outpatient surgical procedures in 2000

\$12 billion spent on skin “scarring”

Common wounds treated

- Diabetic ulcers
- Pressure ulcers
- Ischemic ulcers
- surgical wounds
- traumatic wounds
- Late effect radiation tissue damage
- Venous insufficiency

Missouri Baptist Sullivan Hospital is the only medical entity in the area using hyperbaric oxygen therapy. So far, says Culbreath, the results and feedback have been



Wound Care Center patient Bob Deutsch watches TV while receiving hyperbaric oxygen treatment for a foot wound. (Photo by Will Sites/SJ)

The technician monitors treatment and is in the room at all times. The patient can simply rest or watch TV while the pure oxygen does all the work.

“There’s definitely a need for this type

of wound care,” Culbreath says. “That’s why we’re here.”

(Will Sites can be reached at 573-860-6397 or news@sullivanjournal.com)