Grays Harbor Community Hospital Opens New Wound Healing Center

Local News

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Aberdeen, WA - Everyone has heard that time heals all wounds, but the truth is that without advanced therapies, some wounds can take years and even decades to heal while others that do not respond to treatment may lead to amputation in extreme cases. In early November, Grays Harbor Community Hospital will open the Wound Healing Center on their East Campus to offer the community state-of-the-art specialized wound healing care.

"With the rising rate of diabetes, there is a great need for a specialized care center that can treat the ulcers associated with the disease as well as help patients with other skin, bone and tissue conditions caused by illness or injury," says Thom Hightower, GHCH’s Chief Clinical Officer. "The center's doctors and clinical staff are skilled in the latest therapeutic methods in wound management and stay abreast of leading information through continuous training. Patients will be treated with state-of-the art technology from having their progress charted through digital photographs to, in some cases, being treated in the center’s two hyperbaric oxygen chambers."

To establish the center, Grays Harbor Community Hospital partnered with Florida-based National Healing Corporation, which manages wound healing centers nationwide with an average healing rate of 89 percent attained in 12 to16 weeks of therapy. Although the centers treat patients with chronic and advanced conditions that have not responded to previous therapies, the rate of limb amputation for non-responsive wounds is less than two percent.

Program Director Barry Smith explained, "We developed a methodology that has established an impressive record of healing wounds that others thought hopeless. After performing a full diagnosis on a patient's first visit, we take photographs of the wound at each subsequent visit to evaluate the therapy's progress. Our treatments are evidence based and best practice driven meaning our patients do not undergo any treatment or progress to a new level of treatment until the need is clearly indicated."

Likely candidates for treatment are those suffering from diabetic ulcers, pressure ulcers, infections, compromised skin grafts and flaps, and wounds that haven't healed within 30 days.

Patients covered by Medicare and Medicaid may self-refer to the Wound Healing Center. However, one of the center's missions is to build relationships with patients' primary care physicians.

"We become a partner in the patient's medical care," said the Center’s Medical Director, Dr. Jessica Pierce. "While we dedicate our efforts to healing the patient's wound, the primary care physician is free to focus on treating the underlying cause or disease. Through regular reports and phone calls, we work with the patient’s doctors and other experts in the program to develop a total approach to treatment and care."

One of the highly specialized treatments offered at the center is hyperbaric oxygen therapy which works by the patient breathing 100 percent oxygen at greater than normal atmospheric pressure. This increases the amount of oxygen in the patient's blood and plasma allowing the wound to heal from the inside out. Diabetic foot wounds are an excellent example of wounds that may benefit most from this type of treatment.

Relaxing on a bed encased within a large see-through plastic shell, patients can watch movies on televisions mounted above the chamber while hearing the movies and conversing with others outside the chamber through a speaker system. The only physical sensation resulting from the treatment is a slight pressure on the eardrum, such as that felt when a plane lands, as the air in the chamber is compressed.

In addition to tissue oxygenation, the Wound Healing Center also employs the use of vascular studies, tissue culturing and pathology, revascularization, skin grafting, and clinical or surgical debridement.

For more information call the Wound Healing Center located at Grays Harbor Community Hospital’s East Campus (1006 North H Street, Aberdeen) at 360-537-6300.
The Wound Healing Center at Grays Harbor Community Hospital’s East Campus will specialize in the treatment of chronic non-healing wounds and offers hospital-based outpatient wound care and hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

About National Healing Corporation

Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Boca Raton, Fla., National Healing Corporation provides management services and the latest technology and expertise in wound healing to its client hospitals to establish quality wound healing programs. The Joint Commission has awarded National Healing Disease-Specific Care Certification for wound care. Committed to health care compliance and best practice medicine, National Healing emphasizes these priorities in its extensive clinical and business training programs. The privately-held company accounts for 30 percent of all managed and outsourced wound centers in the United States. For more information, please visit www.nationalhealing.com.