

"It's all about being happy", That's what a young mother said to me when I asked her how her son (who was treating) was faring. That truly summed-up the way we were hoping HBOT would help my Mom, Claire Eggen.

My Mom, is a woman who has always put her family first. She has 5 kids, 14 grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren and 1 great great grandchild and she is interested and concerned about everyone. She is a woman of strong convictions and faith and was always willing to share her beliefs with others. Life changed when Mom had a massive stroke in 2004. She went from being independent, caring for herself and a large home to being totally dependent on others for everything. The stroke affected the left side of the brain which is the speech center leaving her trapped in her head unable to communicate. It was devastating to say the least. After 3 mths in a nursing home with intensive Physical and Speech therapy she moved in with my husband and me. We felt it was a "waiting game" we would try to make her feel as comfortable as possible in her last stage of life.

I heard about Hyperbaric Oxygen for stroke patients from my Mother-in-law but had never really looked into it until my sister sat next to a Doctor on her plane trip home from visiting Mom. He started talking to her about the benefits to his patients he had seen using HBOT he was so enthused and excited that it was contagious. As soon as I heard from my sister I started to look on the internet for more information, reading everything I could find, it was so promising. I thought it was going to be a challenge finding a Clinic that would treat and was so pleased to know there was one practically in my own backyard!

When my mom first started treating I would have to wheel her into the clinic. Just getting her into and out of the car was a challenge. Shortly after the treatment began, Mom started walking into the clinic, with my assistance. Some of the other benefits we started to notice were a change in mood - she seemed happier - an increase in energy, less problems with confusion, and reduced episodes of incontinence. Most importantly, we were no longer having to rush her to the hospital because she appeared to be having a TSA. She started enjoying walking outside down our long gravel driveway (try that with a walker) and back several times, even on occasion continuing down the country road before turning back. After 80 treatments we took a break, as recommended, and observed an almost immediate decline in her activity. She could no longer get in and out of bed by herself (my husband would have to pick her up and put her in bed). I had to learn how to turn her, it didn't look good. We were afraid she was fast approaching bedridden status. I felt that Mom should live out her days with us and not be confined to a nursing home so, we decided to resume HBOT treatments to see if her health could be improved.

Presently, Mom has responded to the treatment. She is back to getting in and out of bed by herself, and can walk with assistance (only needed due to her being a fall risk). We realize that Mom will never be cured by HBOT, and that her results are not incredibly dramatic; we had realistic expectations going in to this, after all she is 92 years old! What we only ever hoped to accomplish through HBOT is to raise her quality of life, and that goal has been met above and beyond what anyone in the family anticipated.

I also need to address the amazing staff that works at the Wisconsin Integrative Hyperbaric Clinic they are everyone's "cheerleaders". From the moment you walk into the clinic you are made to feel so welcome. The greetings are always so warm that Mom can't help but smile and feel like she's "Queen for the day". When Mom walks into the clinic she may be dragging but when she leaves the clinic she's raring go, sometimes wanting to stay up long past my own bedtime.

I have often joked about being a "living billboard" for HBOT. I talk to or send information to anyone I think needs to know the benefits of Hyperbaric Oxygen. I have been eye witness to the positive effects that the therapy has had on my Mother and I feel obligated to share this with others so that they can improve their own quality of life or that of a loved one. It comes down to happiness, my mothers, my own, and the happiness of those who can learn from this experience.