



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: September 9, 2014
Prepared By/Phone Number: David Salazar
Office of the Travis County Judge
512-854-9555

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Samuel T. Biscoe
Travis County Judge

Commissioners Court Sponsor:

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

APPROVE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE USE OF HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY AND OTHER MEDICAL TREATMENTS AND THERAPY FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AND POST TRAUMATIC STRESS SYNDROME FOR VETERANS.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

Please see attached.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

WHEREAS, signature wounds of Iraq and Afghanistan are Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and are significant health issues for Texas Veterans returning from their tours of duty;

WHEREAS, the effects of TBI and PTSD have no definitive medical treatments other than palliative drugs and counseling leaving Veterans at the mercy of these long lasting and life threatening conditions, the results of which sometimes includes suicide;

WHEREAS, several well-documented, curative therapies are available, including Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy that offers additional, alternative and curating ways to restore Veterans lives and minds;

WHEREAS, numerous studies have demonstrated that, left untreated, these injuries adversely impact the returned Veterans' lives frequently resulting in destroyed families, drug and alcohol use, unemployment, mental illness, incarceration, and homelessness;

WHEREAS, these results manifest themselves in society and our communities as increased unemployment, public health treatment costs, mental illness costs, alcohol and drug treatments, family breakups and disrupted lives; and

WHEREAS, neither the Veterans Administration, Military Medicine nor Medicare reimburses medical practitioners for their efforts to help these Veterans.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, THE TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT, HEREBY URGE THE TEXAS STATE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE FUNDING AND FOCUS TO PROVIDE RESULTS-ORIENTED, EVIDENCE-BASED, PROVEN TREATMENT, INCLUDING HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY FOR RETURNING VETERANS SUFFERING THE RESIDUAL AFTER EFFECTS OF TBI AND PTSD.

Signed and entered this 9th day of September, 2014.

SAMUEL T. BISCOE
County Judge

RON DAVIS
Commissioner, Pct. 1

BRUCE TODD
Commissioner, Pct. 2

GERALD DAUGHERTY
Commissioner, Pct. 3

MARGARET GOMEZ
Commissioner, Pct. 4



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New Study Reaffirms: Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Should Be Standard Treatment for Veterans

December 6, 2011

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So why does the government keep blocking its use?

Research from health pioneer (and former ANH-USA board member) Dr. Paul G. Harch [published in the *Journal of Neurotrauma*](#) indicates that hyperbaric oxygen therapy, or HBOT, is able to dramatically help veterans with post-concussion syndrome (a form of traumatic brain injury) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Dr. Harch is an associate clinical professor of medicine at

Louisiana State University in New Orleans.

Since January 2007, ANH-USA has been bringing attention to [a project to have veterans treated with HBOT](#). In HBOT, the patient is put in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber, which saturates the tissues with twelve times more oxygen than can be absorbed by breathing. This greatly enhances the body's own healing process.

Under normal circumstances, oxygen is transported throughout the body only by red blood cells. With HBOT, oxygen is dissolved into all of the body's fluids, the plasma, the central nervous system fluids, the lymph, and the bone, and can be carried to areas where circulation is diminished or blocked. In this way, extra oxygen can reach all of the damaged tissues and the body can support its own healing process. The increased oxygen greatly enhances the ability of white blood cells to kill bacteria, reduces swelling, and allows new blood vessels to grow more rapidly into the affected areas. It is a simple, non-invasive, and painless treatment.

[According to Dr. Harch's new study](#), even three years after the vets sustained brain injury, one month of HBOT was able to induce improvements in brain blood flow, cognition, symptoms, and quality of life, while the veterans experienced fewer suicidal thoughts.

Specifically, improvements were seen in 92% of vets experiencing short-term memory problems, 87% of those complaining of headaches, 93% of those with cognitive deficits, 75% with sleep disruption, and 93% with depression. There were also improvements in irritability, mood swings, impulsivity, balance, motor function, IQ, and blood flow in the brain, as well as the reduction in PTSD symptoms and suicidal thoughts. And there was a reduction in—or complete elimination of—psychoactive and narcotic prescription medication usage in 64% of those previously prescribed the medication.

One major problem is that the HBOT treatment is currently “off-label.” In other words, it is [an FDA-approved treatment for some conditions](#)—but not for traumatic brain injury (TBI) or PTSD. Because of this, the Department of Defense does not allow HBOT to be prescribed for its veterans—they say they don't prescribe off-label medications and treatments for these diagnoses, and [claim that they can only use HBOT after it has been approved by the FDA for this use](#).

This is a completely false and misleading statement! The Department of Defense often uses off-label antipsychotic drugs for treatment of TBI and PTSD. This should not surprise us. The FDA receives a large proportion of its budget from pharmaceutical manufacturers. And the government turns to drugs, often very inappropriate and damaging drugs, to treat damaged veterans without even considering alternatives.

[Nearly 280,000 individuals received antipsychotic medication](#) in 2007. Yet over 60% of them had no record of a diagnosis for which these drugs are approved. Antipsychotic drugs were prescribed off-label for PTSD (42% of the patients), minor depression (40%),

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major depression (23%), and anxiety disorder (20%)—with about 20% having more than one condition. About 20% of veterans diagnosed with PTSD—or nearly 87,000 patients—are prescribed an antipsychotic each year even though it is an off-label use.

TBI and PTSD severely and disproportionately affect military who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan—approximately 546,000 have TBI, post-concussion syndrome (PCS), and PTSD, and yet their treatment options are limited. HBOT is an effective and economical treatment for PCS and PTSD, without the very dangerous and negative side effects of antipsychotic medication.

The off-label use of HBOT is a huge freedom of choice issue in medicine. But even more important, if we really want to support our troops rather than just pay lip service, don't we need to give them the safest, most economical, and most effective treatment for their traumatic brain injuries and PTSD?

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41 Responses to "New Study Reaffirms: Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Should Be Standard Treatment for Veterans"

Dawn says:

March 12, 2013 at 7:00 pm

I am a disabled veteran who has several health problems (chronic fatigue is one of the biggest problems actually due to my autoimmune diseases) and I totally agree that the Armed Forces are NOT set up for this kind of therapy. They don't really want to treat or heal anyone except for drugs. It's a shame really so this would probably be utilized in VA hospitals but good luck getting in there to see a provider, that's if they don't switch that provider on you a thousand times per month.

My point is, homeopathic is a good alternative but my insurance won't cover it. I can't pay a doc or nurse \$400/hr to see him/her several times per year. As I said and others pointed out...big pharma rules this nation! They control the vaccines that are killing and injuring the troops too...

But hey, from the words of Hillary Clinton, "What difference does it make?" To me, it's a BIG difference because I see friends and family suffering from their time spent in the military and they get no help when they get out.

I know when Jessica Lynch fell into the hole many years ago, they saved her leg from the HBOT chamber. It works wonders! I think pro football players us it regularly too if I'm not mistaken to heal from their games....

I am sure if more doctors used it, the cost would come down ,not to mention the cases of chronic illnesses. Just saying!

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[Scott Fub...](#)

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