

Healing Arizona Veterans sponsors hyperbaric oxygen therapy for eligible vets

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A veteran receives treatment at Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy of Arizona in the Phoenix area. The private facility treats veterans for traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder from combat. NorthStar Hyperbaric in Tucson also offers treatment. Courtesy of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy of Arizona

Armando served in the Marines and was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan where he was in combat, exposed to multiple blasts. He was knocked out four times.

He suffered traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. He sought treatment at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Tucson, but he found little relief for his stress and anxiety, memory loss, or being able to read, write and carry on a conversation. The veteran, who could not hold down a job, was diagnosed with post-concussion syndrome, and developed an autoimmune disease from toxic exposure during the war.

Armando is one of many veterans who gave testimony about his ordeal to Healing Arizona Veterans. The non-profit organization raises funds to treat eligible Arizona veterans for war-related traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder through hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

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Since undergoing treatments, Armando is now working and can cope with his stress and anxiety. His memory has improved and he is able to function, read, write and have conversations, according to his testimonial.

Healing Arizona Veterans funds the costly treatment at a facility in Tucson, NorthStar Hyperbaric at 7598 N. La Cholla Blvd., and one in Phoenix, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy of Arizona at 12802 N. Cave Creek Road. Healing Arizona Veterans was established as a charitable organization in August 2017.

The organization recently received "a high-six figure donation" from the trust of an anonymous donor that may fund the treatment of up to 75 veterans, depending on the severity of their injuries, said Sa'ad Allawi, chief strategy and operations officer of the organization. The cost to fully treat a veteran can range from \$10,000 to \$15,000, depending on the severity of their condition. The anonymous donor "believed in supporting injured veterans with any effective therapy that might alleviate their suffering," said Allawi.

He explained that insurance companies and Medicare do not approve paying for hyperbaric oxygen therapy for traumatic brain injuries or PTSD because the Food and Drug Administration has not approved the treatment for those conditions. The FDA wants further studies done.

Meanwhile, the treatment for veterans has been approved by legislators in eight states — Arizona, Oklahoma, Texas, Indiana, Kentucky, Florida, North Carolina and Wyoming. Allawi said 14 other states are considering passing legislation for hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatment for veterans, and in October 2020 then President Donald Trump signed Senate Bill S785 into law, which offers to pilot the treatment of veterans utilizing alternative therapies, including hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

In Phoenix, the treatment began 22 years ago and in Tucson it started 18 years ago, and a total of 100 veterans have been treated, said Allawi. Dr. Carol Henricks, a neurologist and clinical director for Healing Arizona Veterans, gives a diagnosis and consults with patients to see if they are eligible for the treatments at the Tucson and Phoenix facilities.

Presently, the charitable organization is paying for the treatment of 14 veterans, mostly in Tucson, and 20 are being assessed for the treatment. The therapy — 100% medical-grade oxygen under pressure to promote healing — activates stem cells at eight times the normal rate and activates over 8,000 dormant genes to repair damage in the brain and other parts of the body, explained Allawi.

The Tucson and Phoenix facilities have the capacity to treat 300 veterans annually, and other providers will be added as the need for treatment grows, said Allawi.

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Healing Arizona Veterans

Healing Arizona Veterans, a charitable organization, accepts donations to fund the hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatment for veterans who suffer from war-related traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.

To listen to testimonials from veterans go to

<https://healingarizonaveterans.org/testimonials/>

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