



New state-of-the-art surgical suite gives patients a leg up

Tom Schnorrenberg is back to taking walks with his dog after surgery at Lawrence General's new Santagati Center restored the blood flow to his legs.

Photo: Jonathan Kannair

Lawrence General's new hybrid surgical suite keeps more complex surgeries close to home

The pain in Tewksbury resident Tom

Schnorrenberg's legs was agonizing. He and his Lawrence General vascular surgeon, Arthur (Chip) Gonsalves, MD, of Vascular and Vein Associates, had been monitoring his advancing peripheral artery disease for several years. By early spring 2017, the pain was severe enough to disrupt his sleep and made even short walks nearly impossible. The time had come, both agreed, to get the blood circulating freely to his legs again.

"Dr. Gonsalves had told me it was wise to wait for surgery until the pain was really bad," recalls Tom, an 80-year-old former Marine and retired electronics professional. "Then he told me about this special hybrid surgical suite that Lawrence General Hospital was building. He said there wasn't another like it around and that it would



Throughout his surgery and recovery, Tom Schnorrenberg's wife, Karen, has been at his side providing unwavering support.

A LEG UP

allow him to do a better and more thorough job of fixing me up. That is all he had to say. I told him I'd wait a couple more months until it was built and have my surgery there."

Those last couple of months were hard, remembers Tom's wife, Karen. "I wanted to call Dr. Gonsalves and ask him to just do the surgery. But Tom said no. Being the old Marine that he is, he stuck it out," she says.

New digs. On May 3, Tom and Dr. Gonsalves entered Lawrence General Hospital's new hybrid operating suite—the first case to be performed in the only hybrid surgical suite north of Boston.

"Repeat imaging is generally the first step in any complex procedure like this," says Dr. Gonsalves. "The studies the day of his surgery showed us a significant progression in Mr. Schnorrenberg's arterial disease, which explained his worsening pain."

"They rolled me into the surgical suite, and it was like something out of *Star Wars*," Tom says. "My first impression was how large the room was, with big pieces of equipment everywhere and lots of people."

Tom and Dr. Gonsalves had made the right call in waiting for the hybrid surgical suite. Dr. Gonsalves was able to use the integrated

imaging equipment to see the circulation issues deep in Tom's legs, alternating between endovascular treatment with stents in some areas and traditional surgical techniques in other areas.

"The capability of this surgical suite gave us the flexibility to systematically do what needed to be done for Mr. Schnorrenberg. When all was said and done, through two groin incisions, we had completely restored blood flow to both legs," says Dr. Gonsalves. "The size of the hybrid room allows the surgical and interventional teams to work together. The surgeon often gets the credit, but there were about 10 people contributing to the success of the case."

Bright future ahead. Two weeks post-surgery, Tom says he is doing great. "It is unbelievable. Even in the hospital, when I was tired, a bit off-balance and getting back on my feet, that pain I had been feeling in my legs was totally gone. And now, there's still a little bit of discomfort where he made the cuts, but my legs feel great!"

With the surgery behind him, Tom is looking forward to strolling through Boston with his sister and helping his daughter get her new retail store up and running. Another benefit of the surgery, he adds with a smile: "Both of my feet are warm again!"

GET RESULTS

To learn more about the new Santagati Center for surgery at Lawrence General, visit lawrencegeneral.org/services-and-centers/surgery/surgical-center.aspx.