



Margaret's Tremendous Comeback!

bvna *More than you'd expect from home care.*

Brockton Visiting Nurse Association
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"These guys are fantastic!"

That was the first thing we heard exclaimed when welcomed into Margaret Hittel's home with Jessica Demers, Occupational Therapist and Rich Hemingway, Physical Therapist.

Margaret was delighted to see the two clinicians from Brockton Visiting Nurse Association (BVNA), who had both been a significant part of her care team. It was plain to see that there was an easy give and take between the three of them and they shared a common story. To our delight, Margaret was very animated in telling us why she thought they were so fantastic.

"I feel like I'm doing 100% better since I came home."

Margaret, a very independent woman, is 78 years old and was a school bus driver in Brockton and Stoughton for over 30 years. Being no stranger to the roads, it is incredibly ironic that it was a car accident that would end up being the situation that led to several months of care being required after one fateful night out.

It was October 26th and Margaret, who wasn't the usual driver of her friends who all go to Bingo together, was the driver that night. On the way home, in her new car, she was broadsided! That's when her challenging ordeal began.

She was taken by helicopter to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, where she was treated for multiple internal injuries requiring surgery, including a collapsed lung. She had to have her spleen removed and was hospitalized for a week. After recovering in the hospital, Margaret was then transitioned to John Scott House Rehabilitation & Nursing Center in Braintree for three weeks of in-patient rehab. Finally, she was able to come home by Thanksgiving with a referral for home healthcare services from BVNA. Her BVNA care consisted of a full team approach of nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social work and home health aide services. By this point, she was on oxygen, had to get around with a walker and was getting depressed.

"It drives me crazy when I'm down."

It was clear that Margaret loves life: gardening, spending time out in the sun, attending to her house plants, walking her dog Turner and enjoying her coffee. Her condition had the potential to severely limit her ability to fully take advantage of these things that she cared so much about and it was taking a toll on her.



When she first returned home, Margaret required assistance with cooking, coffee-making, laundry, dressing, showering and watering her house plants. She initially had good days and bad, as her functional independence was limited due to requiring the use of the walker and oxygen.

According to Jess, "Margaret has always been a strong and independent individual, so this setback really challenged her in many ways, but she was a hard worker and very determined."

Margaret participated in a variety of upper extremity/lower extremity strengthening, endurance-building and balance exercises. As time progressed, she started participating more in kitchen activities and even started making her own coffee again. Said Jess, "She always told me that there was a certain way she liked to make it, so this was a HUGE goal of hers!"

Margaret actually improved her function beyond her baseline, including no longer needing a cane to walk or the oxygen! She demonstrated a reduced fall risk, including sitting to standing from a chair 12 times in 30 seconds!

Rich commented, "Even on those days when she was not feeling her best and did not want to get out of bed, she would at least try something with therapy. She knew how important it was for her to work with therapy if she wanted to reach her goals. Now she is back to her old self and dancing up a storm!"

The old saying is that a picture is worth a thousand words and the pictures of Margaret, along with Jess and Rich, clearly demonstrate just what a difference BVNA has made. We can see her enjoying caring for her plants, making her coffee and doing some exercises, all with the wonderful smile and sense of humor that are so much a part of her. We are thrilled that Margaret has done so well in recovering both physically and emotionally after such a difficult experience.



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