

Testimony in Support of HB 3460

Submitted to the Oregon Senate Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

It is my honor to write in strong support of House Bill 3460.

My name is Dr. Dessa Bingley. I am the Director of Be Well Holistic Health, an integrative holistic neurology clinic in Portland, and the Executive Director of TeamWorks, Portland's only nonprofit hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) clinic making this treatment accessible to veterans. I am certified in functional hyperbaric medicine and have the great privilege of working closely with veterans who are healing from traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

I'd like to briefly explain how hyperbaric oxygen therapy works and then share what I've seen firsthand in the lives of veterans who have accessed this care.

The Mechanism of HBOT

In the hyperbaric chamber, patients receive up to **800% more oxygen** than they would under normal atmospheric conditions. This concentrated oxygen delivery dramatically enhances the body's ability to produce **adenosine triphosphate (ATP)**—the energy currency of our cells—and catalyzes the release of **endogenous stem cells**. In fact, HBOT has been shown to generate **eight times more** stem cells than baseline levels, a regenerative effect unmatched by any stem cell therapy in the world.

The result is true repair and regrowth of brain and nervous system tissue—something we have not seen reliably with any other treatment modality for TBI.

The Life-Changing Transformations I Witness as an HBOT Physician

A course of treatment typically lasts about eight -12 weeks. And while every body is different, I've been **honored to witness a remarkably consistent pattern of healing - each stage reflecting the known physiological effects of HBOT.**

These changes aren't just clinical—they're deeply human. They reflect the activities of daily living; of sleep, mobility, memory, connection, and hope.

Veterans arrive carrying stories of pain — some visible, some buried deep — and the quiet grief of not recognizing themselves anymore. And I have the honor of being present when they regain capacities long thought lost.

- **Week 1:** The first thing we often hear is, *“I slept.”* Sometimes it’s said with disbelief. For many, it’s the first full night of sleep in years. **Relief from nightmares and insomnia** is often the first thing patients notice - for those living with PTSD, this alone is life-changing.
- **Week 2:** The chronic pain starts to soften. *“I forgot what it felt like to not hurt all the time.”* We see significant reductions in **chronic pain**, especially persistent headaches and musculoskeletal discomfort. This is due to HBOT’s powerful **anti-inflammatory effects**, including reductions in **neuroinflammation**.
- **Week 3:** Something shifts. A veteran will say, *“It’s like the fog is lifting. I can think again.”* That moment when creativity returns—when memory comes back, when critical thinking and problem solving feel possible again—is the moment we begin to see dignity return. This correlates with a measurable **increase in stem cell activity** and the rebuilding of damaged neural pathways.
- **Week 4:** *“I didn’t think this was possible.”* improvements in **motor control** emerge. Veterans who entered treatment with mobility aids often arrive at the clinic without their mobility aids by the 4th week of treatment. Handwriting and capacity to tie one’s shoes improves. Their confidence grows. This correlates to systemic peripheral nerve and blood flow perfusion - resulting in **neuro-muscular healing**.
- **Week 5: Family members and caregivers** begin to reach out, often emotionally with gratitude, noting major changes in emotional regulation, reduced outbursts, decreased suicidal ideation, and improved connection and relationships.
- **Week 6:** *“I can feel things again.” “I had a moment of joy today—and I noticed it.”* Around week 6 is when the veterans themselves start to integrate and trust that what is happening is real.
- **Week 7:** And then, among the ~400 veterans we have served, almost always hear the same sentiment:

“I haven’t felt like myself in 15 years. Thank you for giving me my life back.”

These moments never stop being profound. They never stop breaking me open. And they never, ever feel like enough in a system that still doesn't offer this care to those who need it most. I shouldn't be holding this torch alone.

A Moral and Medical Imperative

HBOT is **safe**. HBOT is **effective**. And there is no medical, scientific, or ethical reason that this therapy should remain inaccessible to veterans—especially those who are low-income with barriers to access care.

I urge this committee, with all sincerity, to pass HB 3460 and make hyperbaric oxygen therapy available to Oregon veterans who need it most.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to those who have served.

Sincerely,

Dessa Bingley
Director, Be Well Holistic Health
Executive Director, TeamWorks
Certified Functional Hyperbaric Physician