

Medical Device Saves Teen from Lifetime On Ventilator

In January, 18-year-old Reggie Lamour 's neck was broken while he played in a rugby game in Naples, Florida. In one moment, the active, athletic young adult with a bright future faced a life-time of ventilator dependency. But there was hope. Lamour's injury qualified him to receive a cutting edge implant through Broward Children's Center. On March 4, the surgery to implant the NeuRX™ Diaphragm Pacing System (DPS) was performed at Jackson Memorial Hospital, one of only four hospitals in Florida authorized to perform the surgery.

"He's doing so well. It is much better than the ventilator," said Jolena Diudonne, Lamour's mother. "It is a godsend. He can move around and has more mobility. We are so thankful."

"Just 45 minutes after the surgery, the patient was able to be taken off the ventilator and breathe on his own with the DPS," said Patricia Byers , M.D., chief of surgical nutrition at Jackson. "The patient is now able to use the DPS for two hours at a time, three times a day. The device gives these patients a lot more independence."

"These devices and this surgery are a huge step forward for the independence, health and happiness of those reliant on a respirator to breathe," said Broward Children's Center CEO, Marjorie Evans . "This literally takes thirty pound of equipment off the body and wheelchair of many of those we serve and allows them to be free of a machine that is expensive, awkward, and often stigmatizing."

Lamour received the Diaphragm Pacing System (DPS) through a program developed by Broward Children's Center and funded by the Florida Department of Health. The device was developed at Case Western Reserve University and the University Hospitals of Cleveland by manufacturer Synapse Biomedical, Inc.

The system consists of four electrodes implanted in the diaphragm to stimulate the muscle and affect respiration. The machine is quiet, has no tubes, and is powered by a battery pack the size of a cell phone. Broward Children's Center has established a relationship with Synapse and the medical team headed by Raymond P. Onders , M.D. in an effort to make the life-changing procedure more widely available to children and young adults with profound disabilities.

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