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FORMER JTDMH CEO RETURNS HOME AND TURNS TO JTDMH FOR CARE

Over the years, Bob Harman spent a good deal of time at Joint Township District Memorial Hospital. Not as a patient or doctor, but as the former Chief Executive Officer.

Upon retiring, Bob moved with his wife to the Cleveland area for a change of pace but quickly moved back to the Grand Lake region to be closer to family. An avid golfer, Bob swung, chipped and putted his way through constant knee pain, the result of severe arthritis. When enough was finally enough, he sought help from the only place he trusted with his care – JTDMH and Grand Lake Health System.

"I have known Jim [Dr. James A. O'Neill M.D.] personally for some time but it was the Hospital's quality reputation and Jim's expertise in orthopedics that led me there," said Mr. Harman.

Dr. O'Neill is a highly respected orthopedic surgeon in the Grand Lake Health System and has seen many patients with knee problems over the years. After seeing Bob's x-rays, Dr. O'Neill knew the retiree would have to undergo total knee replacement surgery of both knees. "He told me I should have come to him years ago because the damage to my knees was so severe," said Bob.

It's a story that's becoming more and more common among Boomers. When prescription medicines no longer work on the pain, patients turn to surgery. Where the procedure was once thought to be reserved for the much elderly, Boomers are now the largest growing age group having total knee replacement (TKR) surgery, according to a Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery report.

"We all want to be healthy and live active, independent lives as long as possible. For patients living with chronic knee pain, total knee replacement surgery is a viable solution that can drastically improve the quality of life," offers Dr. O'Neill. It's a procedure that's also become safer and quicker to recover from thanks to less invasive techniques, or one requiring a smaller surgical incision.

Bob had his first knee replacement in early 2007 that saw a significant reduction in his pain. Happy with the results, Harman scheduled the second surgery for his other knee in the fall. Both surgeries were performed by Dr. O'Neill at JTDMH and aftercare was coordinated through Grand Lake Health System. Bob was back on the course, reportedly swinging better within six weeks of each surgery, but these were not tee times easily made.

"It was a long fought uphill battle to get to where I was. I give all credit to the Physical Therapy Department for being able to push me to my limits and get me to do what was necessary for a healthy recovery," said a reflective Harman.

Even after the physical therapy, in and outpatient, Bob committed himself to performing the recommended exercises to strengthen his knee, which he continues to do to this day. "The harder you work at anything and the more you push, the more you get back and experience the rewards sooner," said the happy patient.

"I definitely feel that I have a new lease on life. Coming home to JTDMH to have the surgeries was the best decision I could have made."

For more information on total knee replacement (TKR) at JTDMH and to find out if the surgery is the right option for you, contact Dr. O'Neill's office at (419) 394-4636 or Joint Township Hospital at (419) 394-3335.