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There was an abundance of oxygen breathing life into Palatka with the grand opening of Hyperbaric Health Services on Thursday.

The new hyperbaric oxygen therapy medical facility, 524 Zeagler Drive in Palatka, specializes in the treatment of non-healing wounds found in diabetic patients, burn victims, traumatic wounds and radiation-induced wounds, according to hyperbaricspalatka.com.

“Palatka needs (this service),” said Mitchell Hall, hyperbaric specialist and chief operating officer. “Palatka’s one of the highest per capita for diabetics.”

As part of the treatment, patients lay in a breathing chamber and are exposed to 100% oxygen, greater than atmosphere levels. The oxygen treatments help heal wounds with 20 to 40 treatments.

“The oxygen molecules (shrink) down to where you can get 1,200 times the amount of oxygen into your lungs,” Hall said. “Plus, the pressure causes oxygen to supersaturate into the blood plasma, getting oxygen into areas that your blood can’t get to.”

Treatments are usually covered by Medicare and common providers, said John Milanick, medical director for Express Health. The cost is about \$200 per treatment. The center’s team includes Medical Director Dr. Robert Pendrak, Advanced Nurse Practitioner Leianne Boudreau, Hyperbaric Chamber Technologist Joe Miller and Hall.

The center already has five patients who are going through treatment, and appointments can be made through doctor referrals or self-referrals.

Other locations include St. Augustine, Palm Coast and Gainesville.

Milanick said he saw one patient who had waited for six years to get treatment for a wound on her foot but couldn’t because every place was too far. Now, she’s a patient at the Palatka facility and can get the treatment she needs to heal, he said.

“In our county health statistics, Palatka and Putnam is really low on the list as far as counting health for the state (and) most of its access to care,” Milanick said. “(A health problem) goes and goes until it gets too bad. ... We’re picking up where primary care is failing.”

For more information, call 385-3857.

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