



CRASH, TEST PROGRAM

After a scary car accident, Marijo Cox healed with the help of innovation and compassion at Regional One Health

When Marijo Cox was rushed to Regional One Health's Elvis Presley Trauma Center after a head-on car crash, she was scared – but that didn't stop her from taking part in a unique program to test a product that could improve care for patients with broken bones.

Marijo says the compassion and professionalism she found at Regional One Health made it easy to trust the medical team when they offered something new.

She never doubted their expertise. She could tell they cared, and that they had her best interests at heart.

Besides, the device they wanted her to try looked really, really cool.



It all started with the terror of heading to the trauma center after her vehicle was struck near Coldwater, Mississippi when another driver crossed over the double yellow line.

"I have lived in Desoto County for 10 years, and the other 54 years I've lived within 100 miles of Memphis, so I'm very familiar with the trauma center and the shape people are in when they're taken there," she said. "So I was terrified."

The Elvis Presley Trauma Center is designated as a level-one trauma center for Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas, the only facility in a 150-mile radius that can treat the most severely injured and ill patients. Marijo's worry was understandable, but quickly put to rest: "From the minute I got there, I received the best nursing care I've ever experienced, not just personally but having spent time with others in the hospital," she said.

Today she can even laugh when she remembers the moment doctors gave her the option to try a new device to heal her broken wrist.

She'd initially been fitted with a splint that went all the way from her fingers to over her elbow: "It was big and cumbersome," she said, and she dreaded the thought of having to wear it for weeks. "I had never broken a bone before, but my daughter broke both of her arms at the same time, so I know how awful a cast can be."

Now, here was a trauma surgeon showing her a light, sleek webbed sleeve that would let her skin breathe. She could get it wet, he told her. If her skin itched, she could scratch it.

"The doctor brought it in and told me it's much more comfortable, it's lighter, you can shower in it, and asked me if I'd be interested," she said. "I took one look at the big cast I was wearing and one look at the one in his hand and I said, 'Yes, please!'"

The device Marijo was presented with was created by the medical startup Cast21. It is being used by surgeons and patients at Regional One Health as the first Incubator Project in the health care system's Center for Innovation, which opened in 2016 to



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give innovators a place to test products and ideas that can improve the quality of care for patients.

For Marijo, it was an example of how Regional One Health isn't just about compassionate and attentive treatment – it's about innovative care as well.

Marijo, who also suffered a fractured sternum, broken ribs and chip in her left heel in the crash, said she's grateful for the treatment she received at Regional One Health, and never for a second regretted her choice to test Cast21's product.

The device was easy from the start. She was fascinated as she watched doctors slip the webbed sleeve over her arm and fill it with a colorful resin that in a matter of minutes hardened to protect her fractured bone. "Watching them put it on was just cool," she said. "Seeing them pump that polymer in there and watching it change colors was really neat."

While wearing the device, she could use a computer, shower, do chores, etc. "I'd go outside to sit and read, and I could just come back in and wash the sweat off my arm," Marijo said. "It was fabulous. It wasn't heavy or bulky – it was light and breathable."

The only problem was some rubbing against her fingers, but that was easily addressed: "The sweet nurse in intensive care said, 'We can fix that.' She



put moleskin around it, and I was fine. After a while, it didn't bother me at all."

Better yet, the Cast21 team would also take steps to address Marijo's concern, a testament to how they're using feedback they received through the Center for Innovation to make patients' experience with their product even better.

For Marijo, it already deserves rave reviews. After a couple months, doctors removed the device – "He just snipped three things and it was off – just amazing," she said – and her wrist had healed completely. "I would highly recommend it," she said. "I'd give it an 11 on a 1 to 10 scale. I don't know why they don't put it on everything!"



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