



Blood Conservation News

Fall 2009

Niles Man Chooses Bronson — And Gets a Second Chance

Fit and physically active all his life, William "Rex" Weller never smoked or drank. His doctors told him he had the body of a man 20 years younger. So when Rex went into heart failure at almost 90, it was a frightening and unexpected experience for him and his family.

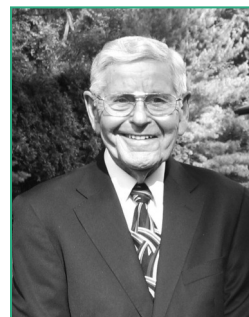
Rex and Donna, of Niles, were told by Mundathaje Bhat, MD, of Cardiovascular Disease of Niles, that Rex needed surgery to replace a failing valve. But as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, undergoing major surgery presented significant challenges for Rex. Because of his religious convictions, Rex would not accept a blood transfusion. Dr. Bhat had referred other Witnesses to Chicago for bloodless surgeries. But Donna hated the thought of traveling to the congested city while trying to care for and help her husband. The Wellers turned to their church's Hospital Liaison Committee, who referred them to Zahir Rashid, MD, cardiac surgeon with Bronson Methodist Hospital.

"We couldn't find a heart surgeon in the Niles or St. Joe area that would touch him. They all refused to operate without blood," Donna says. "Dr. Rashid understood what we needed."

Bronson has the only adult blood conservation program in west Michigan. Headed by Warren Behr, blood conservation coordinator, the program addresses a growing need by patients who are

seeking safe and effective alternatives to blood transfusion because of religious convictions, medical concerns or personal preferences. "Warren was there when Rex had his surgery. He came to see Rex in the ICU. It was really comforting to me," says Donna.

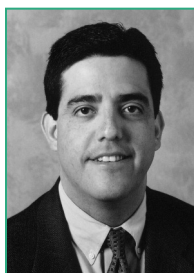
Rex was admitted for surgery last April, two days after his 90th birthday. "I was very happy with the way Bronson operated and (continued on page 3)



Rex Weller of Niles found the care he needed and respect for his beliefs with the help of the Bronson Blood Conservation Service.

A Message from Gabriel Pedraza, MD, Medical Director of Bronson Blood Conservation Service

As a physician, I am passionate about the practice of blood conservation and the many benefits associated with it.



Gabriel Pedraza, MD

That's one of the reasons I am so pleased to pioneer blood conservation at Bronson, and be part of a health system committed to providing the best possible outcomes for our patients.

My background includes extensive experience in blood conservation and transfusion alternatives. I helped develop the blood conservation program at Englewood Hospital in New Jersey — one of the first formal blood conservation programs in the U.S. Since then, I've had the opportunity to teach many other physicians, both nationally and abroad, about the correct usage of transfusions and alternative treatments.

More importantly, I've seen firsthand how my patients benefit when treated with bloodless techniques. Patients treated in this manner are less exposed to infections, tend to recover more quickly and have better outcomes after surgery.

As the only adult blood conservation program in southwest Michigan, Bronson's multi-disciplinary team of providers is

experienced and committed to providing the highest quality of care while respecting our patient's wishes concerning the use of blood products.

We know that proper blood utilization along with the practice of bloodless medicine helps preserve the nation's blood supply for those who need it, and reduces the overall incidence of blood transfusions.

Bronson Blood Conservation Service is committed to understanding each patient and family's needs, and offering them the most advanced techniques and treatment approaches while providing safe alternatives to the use of blood products. This newsletter will tell you more about what we have to offer. Please feel free to contact us at (269) 341-8575 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

*Gabriel E. Pedraza, MD
Bronson Methodist Hospital
Medical Director, Adult Critical Care &
Bronson Blood Conservation Service*

Inside:

What to Know Before Surgery – page 2

How to Avoid Anemia – page 3

Advance Directive Workshop – page 4



Why Blood Conservation at Bronson Is Unique

At Bronson, patients are more than just patients. We recognize that they are individuals who are part of a unique



Warren Behr is the program coordinator of Bronson Blood Conservation Service.

family unit with its own values and belief system. Our values as an organization demonstrate the care and respect we have for each individual and the personal decisions they and their family make about their medical care.

Bronson Blood Conservation Service is a great example

of Bronson meeting the needs and respecting the wishes of those we serve.

Bronson has the only adult blood conservation program in southwest Michigan. That means we are uniquely committed to providing top-quality medical care without the use of blood for patients who request it. Our administrative policies ensure a patient's wishes are respected by means of legal documents and clear identification. By using a team approach, we are able to make sure that physicians, surgeons, anesthesiologists and nurses are skilled in non-blood medical management and blood conservation techniques.

What patients are saying about the Bronson Blood Conservation Service

"I am so thankful for this service! It really helps me focus on my recovery — especially since I know my wishes are being respected."

"I was turned away from another hospital because of my beliefs regarding blood. When I spoke to Warren and got in touch with a cooperative doctor at Bronson, the difference was like night and day. My operation was handled with skill and I was back home with my family in no time. You have truly made a difference in a difficult situation."

"This type of service has been long overdue in our area."

Our approach

Rather than offer only one simple solution, the blood conservation program at Bronson combines several different approaches to address the individual needs of each patient we serve. Our strategies are intended to improve patient outcomes while reducing or avoiding the need for blood transfusion.

Techniques offered include:

- meticulous hemostasis and operative techniques
- acute normovolemic hemodilution and cell salvage
- reduction of the transfusion trigger
- anemia detection and correction
- microsampling and the reduction of unneeded routine tests

Each technique we employ, whether before, during or after surgery, has the capability of conserving a patient's own blood. This approach can reduce or sometimes even eliminate the need for a blood transfusion altogether.

What it means to our patients

Studies show that blood conservation has a number of benefits, including:

- less exposure to new viruses and infections
- less risk of using old donor blood that may not be as good for you
- fewer infections after having surgery or treatment
- faster recovery
- better outcomes after surgery or treatment

Whether a hospital stay is planned or not, Bronson is prepared to provide patients with high quality care without the use of blood products. For that reason, choosing Bronson brings additional peace of mind to many patients.

If you or a family member has questions about blood conservation options or if you would like a physician referral, contact Warren Behr, Bronson Blood Conservation coordinator, at (269) 341-8575.

What to Know Before Surgery

- If you are anticipating surgery, call Warren Behr, Bronson Blood Conservation Service (BBCS) coordinator at (269) 341-8575. He will share the names of physicians who are committed to this "gold standard" of care.
- Always request Bronson's Blood Conservation Service upon admission. You will receive the same quality care, whether your reasons for requesting transfusion alternatives are health related or motivated by religious conviction.
- Make sure that you are given your "No Blood" wristband and that your chart is clearly marked with a sticker indicating participation in the BBCS.

Need a Physician Referral?

If you have questions about how to enroll in Bronson's blood conservation service or would like a physician referral, please contact Warren Behr, Bronson Blood Conservation Service coordinator at (269) 341-8575.

Make your wishes known.

Request a blood conservation magnet, a static-cling decal or a "no blood" sticker for your driver's license. Contact Warren Behr at (269) 341-8575 or behrw@bronsonhg.org.

How Can I Avoid Anemia?

Anemia is the most common blood disorder in the U.S. It occurs when there are not enough healthy red blood cells to carry oxygen to your tissues and organs. Although there are many types of anemia, the most common type is a result of an iron-deficiency. Anemia affects 3.5 million Americans, including one in three women, three percent of men and half of all pregnant women. The elderly and children are also at risk.

Understanding anemia

Your bone marrow needs iron to make hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is the red, iron-rich protein that gives blood its red color. It allows the red blood cells to carry oxygen.



Crystal Williams, RN, is a nurse with a clinical interest in blood conservation.

When there is a shortage of iron, your body cannot produce enough hemoglobin for your red blood cells, which means your tissues do not get enough oxygen. This is what makes you feel tired. You could have mild anemia without even realizing it.

Prevention is key

Crystal Williams, RN, offers some tips to make sure you are getting enough iron:

- Eat a variety of iron-rich foods, including beef and other red meats, beans, lentils, iron-fortified cereals, dark leafy green vegetables, dried fruit, nuts and seeds. Other foods high in iron are apples, bananas, apricots and plums, asparagus, squash, yams, broccoli, tofu and whole grains.
- Combine iron-rich foods with foods high in vitamin C to aid absorption of the iron. Or, take a vitamin C with iron supplement.
- Eat citrus fruit or juice, pinto beans, navy beans, asparagus, broccoli and brussel sprouts, which are rich in folate.
- Eat meat and dairy to take in vitamin B-12.
- Omit or decrease sugar in your diet.
- Decrease intake of coffee and black tea. The polyphenols and tannins decrease iron absorption.
- Reduce your intake of processed food, junk food and fast foods.
- Antacids, calcium, vitamin E and zinc interfere with iron absorption; do not take them with an iron supplement.
- Keep iron supplements out of the reach of small children. Iron supplement overdose is one of the leading causes of poisoning deaths among children.

What you can do

Talk to your doctor if your menstrual periods are very heavy. If you are taking prescription drugs, talk with your doctor or pharmacist to make sure they are not interfering with iron absorption.

Many types of anemia cannot be prevented, but you can help avoid iron-deficiency anemia by eating a healthy diet of various foods rich in iron, folate and vitamin B-12. If you think you may be anemic, talk to your doctor.

Bronson Receives AHA-McKesson Quest for Quality Award

Bronson Methodist Hospital is the 2009 recipient of the American Hospital Association-McKesson Quest for Quality Prize®. This top national honor is awarded annually to one U.S. hospital in recognition of its leadership and innovation in quality, safety and commitment to patient care. In particular, it honors success in achieving the Institute of Medicine's six quality aims to ensure care is safe, timely, efficient, effective, equitable and patient & family centered (STEEEP).

For more information, visit bronsonhealth.com/quality.



Frank Sardone, president & CEO, represented Bronson at the American Hospital Association (AHA) Leadership Summit where Bronson was recognized as the winner of the 2009 AHA – McKesson Quest for Quality Prize. Pictured also are leaders from finalist Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and citation of merit recipient Duke University Hospital. On the left is AHA president Rich Umbdenstock who visited Bronson Methodist Hospital on August 19 to recognize Bronson employees for their efforts.

Niles Man Gets a Second Chance

(continued) the way we were treated," says Rex. Dr. Rashid performed minimally invasive surgery on Rex's heart and he was released from Bronson just four days later.

"I was so impressed with Bronson," says Donna. "I knew that everything was being done correctly and that Rex was getting the best care that could be given without receiving blood. We got excellent care."

Rex and Donna recognized the benefits of choosing a hospital that is experienced in bloodless medicine and surgery. The Bronson Blood Conservation Service offers many benefits that other hospitals in the area simply can't. Namely, a dedicated blood conservation coordinator who serves as a resource to compare standards of care, obtain a physician referral and make sure the patient's

wishes are respected. Only a hospital like Bronson that is proficient in blood conservation techniques and has the policies and medical protocols in place is able to provide this level of care.

Bronson Patient Care Excellence Statement

Healing with our knowledge
Caring with our hearts
Working together with
Bronson patients and families

*"I was so impressed with Bronson.
I knew that everything was being done
correctly and that Rex was getting
the best care that could be given."
—Donna Weller*

Free Blood Conservation Advance Directive Workshop

Need help completing your Designation of Patient Advocate?

- How do you view blood fractions and medical procedures involving your own blood?
- What are some medical procedures that involve the use of your own blood?
- What are minor blood fractions?
- What products may contain minor blood fractions?

These questions and more will be answered at our upcoming free workshop:

Saturday, October 17, 2-5 p.m.

**Bronson's Gilmore Center for Health Education
7 Healthcare Plaza (off Walnut Street), Kalamazoo**

An advance directive is a legal document that allows you to express your decisions about blood conservation in advance of a procedure or treatment. Advance directives provide a way for you to communicate your healthcare preferences to your family and healthcare professionals ahead of time to avoid confusion later on.

Call (269) 341-8575 to register.

When you call, let us know the number of seats you'd like to reserve.

Help Us Serve You Better!

Please fill out the information below and send this to:

Bronson Blood Conservation Service
Bronson Methodist Hospital
601 John Street, Box 66
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

- Please add me to your list.
- Please remove me from your list.
- Please correct my address.

Complete name and mailing address:

Thank you!

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Bronson Blood Conservation News is published by Bronson Methodist Hospital. The information included is intended to educate and inform.

Correspondence should be directed to Warren Behr at 601 John Street, Box 66, Kalamazoo, MI 49007, or by e-mail to behrw@bronsonhg.org.

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