

# Patient gets relief after living 30 years with incorrect asthma diagnosis

May 8 2014, by Katie Pence

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Sardinia, Ohio, resident Sharon Haskin says she spent her entire life using nebulizers and inhalers to deal with what she thought was a bad case of asthma.

However, after a trip to Florida left her feeling sicker than ever, John, her husband of 36 years, asked her physician to take a closer look and find some answers to her breathing troubles.

"My doctor did a bronchoscopy and found that I had dynamic airway collapse (EDAC)," she says, adding that she might have had the condition as a child and was misdiagnosed for years.

EDAC is a collapse of the trachea and main bronchus of more than 50 percent of its diameter during exhalation. Patients are often misdiagnosed with asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and they present with a chronic barking cough, severe shortness of breath and chest pain.

Haskin was referred to UC Health—"I love UC, and have had great experiences there," she says—and was seen by Sadia Benzaquen, MD, UC Health interventional pulmonologist and UC Cancer Institute physician.

Benzaquen, who is also an assistant professor in the department of internal medicine, passed the newly created Interventional Pulmonology Boards, making him only one of three certified physicians in Ohio and

the only one in the Tristate.

Interventional pulmonology focuses on the use of advanced diagnostic and therapeutic techniques to treat patients with lung cancer, pleural disease and other advanced airway disorders. Benzaquen is currently the only highly trained interventional pulmonologist in the area.

Benzaquen did another bronchoscopy and found the "worst case he'd ever seen," Haskin remembers. She was awake for the procedure.

"As scary as it was, he held my hand the entire time—he's truly one in a million," she says.

Benzaquen prescribed antibiotics, but the condition did not improve, and he suggested a temporary stent to open the airway and tracheoplasty, to repair the trachea and keep the airway open.

"This is not a well-known condition, and we are the only pulmonologists in the region treating these patients with specialized care needs," says Benzaquen.

Haskin had the stent placed around Thanksgiving and underwent the tracheoplasty surgery at Dayton's Miami Valley Hospital in January.

"Dr. Benzaquen told me when he put the stent in that I'd know immediately if it worked, and I did," she says. "As I woke up from the sedation, I noticed right away that I could breathe—finally."

Now, she's able to fill her lungs with air unlike she's ever been able to do before, and it's all thanks to UC Health and Dr. Benzaquen.

"When Dr. Benzaquen saw me for the first time after the surgery, he was so excited—'I can hear your voice,' he said," Haskin recalled, adding that

her voice became much stronger after she stopped all of the asthma treatments. "He's just an amazing doctor—the whole team is wonderful.

"It's important for people to know that they can get the best care possible locally; there's no need to go to a larger medical center in another city when the best is right here in our back yards."

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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