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Foot Drop Revealed: How Creating Conversations About This Little-Known Paralyzing Condition Can Help People Get Back Up

Greensboro, NC - February 4, 2014 – It can be hard to put yourself in the position of others, but just for a minute, imagine: You’ve just woken up from what promised to be a simple surgery with a three-day recovery period. Except you can’t seem to move your foot. Now your doctor is telling you there was a complication and your foot is now paralyzed. The good news is that your foot won’t have to be amputated; however, you may never walk again without the aid of a walker or a brace.

Or maybe you’ve been dreading the time when you would gradually begin to lose the feeling and control of your foot and ankle because you’ve watched your mother for years suffer from a debilitating and hereditary disease that causes this type of paralysis. And while you understand that you no longer have the ability to move your foot, you’re still not sure what to call it or how you might ever regain some of your mobility.

The fact is **Foot Drop**, the paralysis of the foot and ankle, could affect you or someone you know because it can go undiagnosed. But with adequate attention and education, finding an effective treatment to manage or even cure foot drop becomes that much easier. The Mayo Clinic defines foot drop as difficulty lifting the front part of the foot. It is not a disease, but rather, a symptom of an underlying neurological, muscular or anatomical condition. It can affect one or both feet and result from stroke, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Charcot-Marie-Tooth Disease, spinal cord injury, as well as, a variety of injuries and other causes. Patients who have been diagnosed with foot drop first tend to describe a feeling of pain, weakness or numbness in their lower extremities. They may also experience difficulty pointing or flexing their foot or toes.

Foot drop can immediately force even an elite athlete to the sidelines of life, unable to tackle the most basic activity like walking to the mailbox.

National marathoner, Beth Deloria, knows all too well how much foot drop has affected her life. Already a Boston Marathon veteran, a severe spinal trauma revealed a series of birth defects affecting Beth's spine. A subsequent surgery would round out the perfect storm of conditions that resulted in nerve damage and left her with foot drop. Not willing to give up an activity that had become an integral part of her life, Beth spent countless hours researching her condition and a treatment that would make running possible again. Now, Beth is back on her feet and just completed a two-year cross-country tour of half marathons.

Treatments for foot drop can vary based on the condition or circumstance that caused it as well as the needs and physical condition of the patient. Some patients may respond to nerve stimulation that electrically motivates the nerve that lifts the foot. Another option can be physical therapy that exercises and strengthens the leg muscles, helping to maintain the range of motion in the knee and ankle. The most common treatment is a leg brace and shoe insert. The brace fits inside the shoe and stabilizes the foot and ankle by keeping the joint at a 90° angle as a patient moves. The greatest outcomes happen when the brace is customized to fit each unique patient, and can probably be best illustrated by a woman running across the country and completing more than 48 races in 24 months.

Since Beth's journey began, quite a few people have been inspired. Among them are seven exceptional men and women from across the country who most embodies her spirit to get back up, and have joined her to form the nation's first foot drop team, TeamUP.

The courageous advocacy of TeamUP is resounding proof that the more conversations that can be had about foot drop; the more people can find their personal solution to regained mobility. But *more* conversations need to be had with our family, friends and doctors so that no one is left alone behind their computer searching for answers.

Learn more about foot drop at www.AllardUSA.com.

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