

# CONWAY LAKES REHAB CENTER - IMPROVING LIVES WITH LYMPHEDEMA TREATMENT



Allen Saper is a gambler—but not when it comes to his health. His health is failing but he owes his progress to

skilled lymphedema therapy to help him climb back to the poker table, albeit with slimmer legs.

He states he has “fat legs,” due to lymphedema, a chronic condition of fluid-edema not being able to flow properly back into circulation and it can result in an arm or leg puffing up like a balloon. His condition is partly due to his chronic obstructive pulmonary obstruction (COPD) condition, heart ailments and his chronic lymphedema.

“I am a horrible patient... a real pain in the...,” admits Saper who has been in and out of the hospital with numerous heart and lung conditions and shows a checklist of health maladies that should be abridged. But it’s not. It’s a list several pages long of numerous chronic morbidities that would make most health personnel shudder. His therapist is undaunted. “He seems to be progressing,” states Catherine Manger, physical therapist, “but I worry about his frequent hospital admissions,” she says. Manger reports that she has been treating Saper with her specialty in lymphedema therapy. “Lymphedema is a chronic condition that we can successfully treat,” and she further explains that lymphedema usually affects one of the arms or legs and is often a consequence of

lymph node removal via surgery due to breast cancer but can be caused by a variety of other conditions and factors that lead to a buildup of the lymph fluid in the extremities.

“I am well qualified to treat this condition,” states Manger, who reports having over 135 hours of clinical demonstration and application of specific manual massage techniques to drain the limbs of fluid. This specialized knowledge also allows her to compress the extremities with a series of padding and bandages that allow further reduction of fluid build-up. She states that Saper has lost quite a few inches after a few treatments of manual drainage, compression with padding and wrapping with specialty bandages. “Now, if I could just get him to be compliant with keeping his compression wrappings on,” states Manger, “then he will be skipping to the tables,” she says.

Just talking with Saper it’s easy to see that he has only two ways -- his way or the highway. But it’s easy to figure due to his many years as a plain clothes policeman servicing all Brooklyn, NY streets. These days he saves his tenacity for the poker tables and most recently won, “the big tournament in Tampa.” He states he beat out 200 others in a “Texas hold ‘em,” style of game. He is now retired and the only things that will light up his eyes are his grandchildren, as was seen after he pulled out a few photos.