

THE CENTER *for* DISC REPLACEMENT *at* Texas Health Center for Diagnostics & Surgery

photos by CRYSTE DESHIELDS



Dr. Jack E. Zigler

Led by three pioneers in the field of Artificial Disc Replacement (ADR), Dr. Blumenthal, Dr. Guyer, and Dr. Zigler, The Center for Disc Replacement is fueled by the goal of empowering neck and back pain sufferers through awareness and education about the importance of motion preservation in spine care. Flexibility matters to spine health, and with artificial disc replacement surgery, the recipient benefits both with their current overall and long-term spine health. With over 2,500 completed surgeries, The Center for Disc Replacement is experienced in finding a comfortable, motion-preserving solution for almost every patient. This life changing surgery allows patients to retain the natural flexibility and movement of the spine, and gives them their quality of life back.

*Dr. Zigler and his patient,
Bridget Toews*



Bridget Toews, grandmother of six and former EPA independent contractor, recently got her life back on track and pain-free, thanks to an artificial disc replacement performed by Dr. Zigler at The Center for Disc Replacement at Texas Health Center for Diagnostics & Surgery. She realized she needed surgical intervention after an MRI last April showed that her cervical spinal issues had progressed to the point where surgery would be her only option. “I have dealt with cervical spine issues for the past 18 years,” Toews explained, “and with my science background, I understood the nature of the problem very well. Last April, however, I did not know that artificial disc replacement (ADR) existed. Neither did my doctor. We both thought my only option was spine fusion.”

ADR is designed for the treatment of disabling pain from disc degeneration in either the neck or lower back, and simultaneously provides pain relief while preserving the natural range of motion. If more conservative and non-surgical options prove to be unhelpful for pain relief, disc replacement may be the best option. With a faster recovery time compared to fusion, and with a relief of stress on adjacent discs (which lowers risk of degeneration at adjacent disc levels, reducing the need for additional surgeries), artificial disc replacement is the ideal solution for many candi-

dates. Candidates for Artificial Disc Replacement have the following characteristics: Neck pain with or without arm pain, lower back pain with or without leg pain, those who have had conservative treatment without significant relief of pain, degenerative disc disease, herniated cervical or lumbar disc, previous disc surgery with continued pain, or have been told they should have a fusion. As a former recipient of spine fusion, Toews was well aware that another fusion could further limit her neck mobility and decided to live with the pain as long as possible. “Then, a few months ago, my daughter-in-law, Christina, who had endured an agonizing lumbar spine problem for nearly a year, discovered The Center for Disc Replacement and Dr. Zigler,” she recalled, “Long story short, the surgery Dr. Zigler and the care team performed restored Christina’s quality of life. That prompted me to investigate further for myself. In doing so, I was impressed by the breadth and depth of Dr. Zigler’s cervical spine experience and knowledge, and I learned of ADR. After having resolved to live with it, I suddenly had a renewed sense of hope because there was a possibility that I could undergo ADR instead of fusion. Retaining mobility was what I wanted most; ADR was the only option that can provide that”

Toews’ insurance denied coverage for the surgery, claiming that ADR in patients who had previously undergone spinal fusion was “investigational” due to when the FDA approved ADR devices. This left her to either suffer through the pain, or to choose to have another fusion, which would further hinder her movement. Knowing that the best option in her case would be ADR, Toews took to the internet, scouring medical research and comparing her case to other major insurance companies that were approving similar situations to prove that this was vital. She struck gold; “My research efforts resulted in documentation that included a ruling from a landmark U.S. District Court Case in which the Court legally defined “investigational” and ruled that an insurance company cannot deny on that basis once a device is no longer limited to research,” Toews said, “and the



photo by PHILLIP SLAUGHTER

current ADR policy of another major insurance company that would have approved my case.” Dr. Zigler and his team initiated and coordinated the entire appeal and submitted additional clinical evidence to further support Toews’ findings. It was a success- the insurance company approved her for surgery. In addition to the world-class physicians and innovative techniques, The Center for Disc Replacement has an unparalleled commitment to their patients. They do much more than just perform a surgery, they take the burden and the worry out of the process. Patients travel from all over the globe for the quality care at The Center for Disc Replacement, and to help everyone secure the best outcome like Toews, the team assists in every aspect; arranging travel and transportation, transferring medical records, scheduling appointments, providing insurance and billing support, finding translation services, and compiling information on the city to make everyone’s stay successful.

Now, two weeks after Bridget Toews’ surgery, she’s in recovery and getting back to her life. “My ADR was

just two weeks ago, but the recovery period seems easier and quicker than it was for fusion. The surgery related pain subsided much quicker and my energy has returned much faster,” she said, “In fact, I was discharged 23 hours after surgery. Not only did I feel ready to go home, my family was commenting that, other than wearing a neck brace, I was walking around acting as though nothing had happened. I felt that good. And I still do.” For sufferers of herniated discs, degenerative disc disease, and chronic pain, they may feel the only solution is spine fusion, but the team at The Center for Disc Replacement is committed to giving patients a better, more flexible option with an easy recovery. “I am quite confident that ADR is restoring my quality of life! And I am so very thankful,” Toews said, “If my experience can help someone else... it will make this journey even more rewarding.”

For more information about The Center for Disc Replacement at Texas Health Center for Diagnostics & Surgery, or to schedule a consultation, please visit THCDS.COM/CenterforDiscReplacement or call 972-403-2792.