

Press release made by Mr. Ludovico Nicolaas, correspondent on Bonaire to the daily AMIGOE newspaper on the ABC islands.

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Translated from Dutch into English

Date of the event : Friday, February 15, 2013

Location : Divi Flamingo Resort, Bonaire, Peter Hughes Meeting Room



Medical Director Dick van der Vaart

In 2012 45 patients have been treated in the recompression chamber of the Foundation Recompression Chamber Bonaire. In total they received 274 treatments. In most cases it involved divers (37) who needed hyperbaric treatment after a dive accident. The other (8) patients received oxygen therapy (hyperbaric oxygen treatment, HBOT) due to insufficiently healing wounds.

This was stated by doctor Dick van der Vaart during a meeting organized by the foundation for the 35 members of the team, 24/7 on call to attend and treat patients who need it. Amongst the patients treated last year also patients were counted from Curacao and Aruba.

Also the meeting was held to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the founding date of the foundation on January 16. According to chairman Ruud Vermeulen the board did not pay much attention to this

event, not even to the 25th anniversary in 2011. This was due to the circumstances that took most of the attention of the board. He named the construction of the building and the new tank, the financing of this activity, negotiations for the new tariffs for the chamber, a new administration system and keeping the foundation operational at the same time. All that being done, now there is time to thank the volunteers, who are always on call for divers who will need hyperbaric treatment resulting from a diving accident.

Vermeulen : “I think that the team of doctors, supervisors, technicians, nurses and operators should be proud of the specialized work they do for the medical society in the southern part of the Caribbean. The chamber on Bonaire is the only state-of-the-art facility for treatment of diving accidents and diabetic wounds on the ABC islands.”

Aruba has no recompression chamber. Curacao has one, but due to organizational issues it is not operational at this moment. This means that almost all diving accidents on the ABC islands are being treated on Bonaire. Mr. Vermeulen also announced that the new website www.bonairehyperbaric.com has been launched without advertisement.

New Chamber

The recompression chamber has been initiated by medical director Dick van der Vaart. In the eighties the diving industry on Bonaire needed a recompression chamber on island, to avoid transportation of patients to Curacao for hyperbaric treatment in case of diving accidents. Dr. van der Vaart succeeded in getting one used chamber donated to the foundation through the Royal Dutch Navy. This happened in 1986. The local island government provided the building, and the chamber has been located in that place for 25 years. Treatment happened under primitive circumstances, as Dr. van der Vaart recalled, in a space too small without air-conditioning.

In 2006 the financial situation of the foundation was at a level, sufficient to purchase a new and modern chamber. It is a place where not only diving accidents are being treated but also patients with insufficiently healing wounds, for example in case of diabetes or amputations.

Special Awards

Finalizing the meeting Dr. van der Vaart surprised seven volunteers with a certificate of merit for extraordinary service over the years. Supervisors Malin Kayser, Pamela Teitel and Linda Baker received an award for over 20 years of continuous service. Diana Nicolaas, Harold Kurban and Ronald Simonis received the award for being available 24/7, when called upon.

Maureen Mercera received a special award for being the nurse in the treatment of a diving accident from Curacao, transported to Bonaire, while being transferred to a depth of over 100 feet in the chamber environment. Usually the treatment depth is not over 65 feet. At lower levels the risk of nitrogen narcosis is imminent.

The Foundation Recompression Chamber Bonaire is an independent foundation to assist in hyperbaric treatment. The board members are Mr. Ruud Vermeulen as chairman, Mr . Robert Smaal (secretary), Mrs. Rosalie Bierings (treasurer) and Mr. Yke Faber.



7 volunteers for the recompression chamber receiving an award of merit for their services.