

Cleveland Clinic Keeps Train Engineer's Heart on Track

Calvin Bowen has been happily driving trains for 38 years. But when his heart started beating irregularly, it almost derailed his career as an engineer with CSX Corporation.

"I was feeling weak and fatigued," says the 65-year-old resident of St. Alban's, WV. "You can't drive a train very well when you're half asleep. It took me a while to figure out what was wrong – that it was my heart."

Bowen had developed atrial fibrillation, a heart condition that more commonly occurs as people get older. During atrial fibrillation, the heart beats chaotically and irregularly. This leads to poor blood flow to the body and causes heart palpitations, shortness of breath and weakness. The condition also increases a person's risk of developing blood clots that may lead to stroke.

Under the guidance of his cardiologist near his hometown, Bowen underwent electrical cardioversion, a procedure that uses an electric current to try to reset the heart's rhythm back to its regular pattern. Unfortunately, the procedure failed to correct Bowen's erratic heartbeat.

"When the electrical cardioversion didn't work, my cardiologist suggested I go to the Cleveland Clinic," Bowen says. "He told me they have a whole wing of the hospital devoted just to atrial fibrillation. I figured why not go to a place where they deal with this everyday?"

At 265 miles away, it is a four-and-a-half-hour trip for Bowen to get from his home to the Cleveland Clinic. Yet, this would not deter him from seeking top-notch care. So he called the Clinic to discuss his problem. To his surprise, they suggested that he use an online program from Cleveland Clinic called MyConsult. "They charge a fee to use the service, but it was a lot cheaper than traveling to Cleveland," says Bowen. "So I decided to give it a try. I'm glad I did."

Getting in Rhythm

MyConsult Online Medical Second Opinion program is a sophisticated, Web-based extension of Cleveland Clinic's 80-plus-year role as one of America's most respected referral institutions. The secure, online service provides remote medical second opinions from Cleveland Clinic specialists for more than 1,000 life-threatening and life-altering diagnoses.

Thanks to expert advice provided by the Clinic's cardiology specialists via, Bowen determined that he should have a cardiac ablation, a minimally invasive procedure that involves destroying abnormal heart tissue with catheters heated with radiofrequency energy. "I'm in rhythm now," Bowen says. "MyConsult worked real well for me. The MyConsult physician reported back to me and explained everything and sent information. I'd recommend MyConsult – especially for people who have a long-distance drive to the Clinic. It saves time and money and decreased my anxiety.

"I was real impressed by the Cleveland Clinic," he adds. "When we arrived, we got right in to see the doctor, without waiting. Everyone was real helpful. There is a doctor in my area who does ablations, but I felt more comfortable coming to the Cleveland Clinic, where they do ablations all the time.

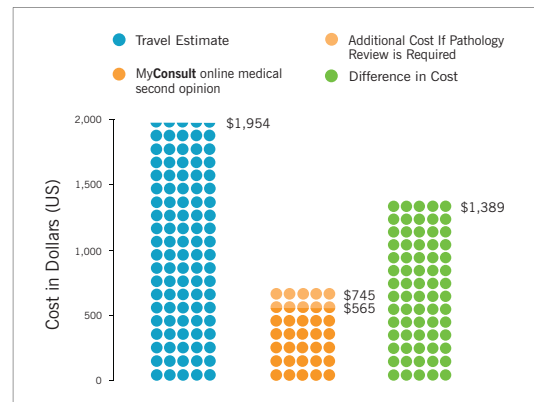
"My wife, Brenda, and our children are also happy with my outcome," Bowen notes. "I plan to enjoy my job a train engineer through the end of the year. Then I'll retire and have fun hunting and fishing."

The following average cost statistics of traveling to the Cleveland Clinic from St. Alban, West Virginia is based on the demographic information of the previous MyConsult patient testimonial.

St. Alban, WV to Cleveland Clinic (approx. 264 mi., 4 hrs 25 min)
Average price for two people traveling to the Cleveland Clinic:

\$1,328.....	Roundtrip Flight for 4 days
\$426.....	Hotel Stay 4 day, 3 nights
\$200.....	Food/Drink 4 days
\$1,954.....	Total Trip Estimate
\$565.....	MyConsult Online Medical Second Opinion
\$1,389.....	Difference in Cost

(Prices are based on an average stay in the City of Cleveland and may vary depending on time of year, length of stay, and advance booking of flight.) October, 2008, v1



Cost of a MyConsult Online Medical Second Opinion vs. Cost of Travel

To learn more about Cleveland Clinic's MyConsult program, visit www.ClevelandClinic.org/myconsult. Registering is easy, and if you choose to seek an online medical second opinion through Cleveland Clinic, the entire process should take 30-45 minutes. You may also contact the MyConsult office at 216.444.3223 or 800.223.2273 ext 43223.

Cleveland Clinic Gets Wyoming Runner up to Speed

When he was healthy, Michael Palmer used to run three or four miles at a time throughout the scenic countryside and lush forests of Laramie, Wyoming. That was before a heart problem slowed him down – way down.

“When my heart was in a normal rhythm, I could run just fine,” he says. “But when it was out of sync, the contrast in my function was so depressing. I could barely make it a mile before I started to black out. I also had periods of nausea and erratic heartbeats. I did not want to live my life like that.”

He doesn’t have to. Thanks to Cleveland Clinic experts, Palmer, 59, should soon be back in running form. Last fall, he flew to Cleveland and underwent a cardiac ablation to resolve his atrial fibrillation (a-fib), a condition that causes the heart to beat chaotically and irregularly. A-fib leads to poor blood flow and causes heart palpitations, shortness of breath and weakness.

The ablation procedure was performed at Cleveland Clinic in a state-of-the-art electrophysiology laboratory. How was it that a man in Wyoming ended up having surgery in Ohio?

“Here in Laramie, we have a shortage of physicians, and there are no cardiologists,” says Palmer. “Since it takes about four months to get an appointment with a doctor, I go to a nurse practitioner. To see a cardiologist, I drive 80 miles to Ft. Collins, Colorado. I can make it there in about an hour and a half, unless it’s snowing in the mountains.

“I was seeking a medical solution for my afib, and the Cleveland Clinic was the number one place recommended by several sources. So I went to the Clinic’s Web site and talked interactively with a nurse online. She suggested that I look into a service offered by Cleveland Clinic called MyConsult.” MyConsult Online Medical Second Opinion program is a sophisticated, Web-based extension of Cleveland Clinic’s 80-plus-year role as one of America’s most respected referral institutions. The secure, online program provides remote medical second opinions from Cleveland Clinic specialists for more than 1,000 life-threatening and life-altering diagnoses.

The online service is a perfect fit for Palmer, who is a computer expert. A native of Colorado, he was a college professor at the University of Colorado, where he taught social psychology and computer research. Several years ago, he decided to do something different and moved to Laramie, where he now serves as a consultant and writer of textbooks about computer networking that have achieved international acclaim. “The Cleveland Clinic MyConsult service fits my lifestyle,” Palmer says. “It was great because I didn’t have to fly to Cleveland for the second opinion, the forms were easy to use, and I received a quick response. The Cleveland Clinic cardiologist wrote a long analysis that was personalized for me. In it, he summarized the information I had sent him, and he provided a detailed assessment of my condition.

“It was clear he had read through everything and thought carefully about it,” he notes. “The doctor also gave me options for treating my a-fib. One of those options was ablation, and he said I would be a good candidate for the procedure. The report was very lengthy. I was very impressed.”

Palmer decided to go ahead with the ablation, which is a relatively non-invasive procedure that “disconnects” the pathway of abnormal

heart rhythms. During the procedure, a catheter (thin, flexible tube) is inserted through a blood vessel and into the heart. Then a special form of energy destroys a small amount of tissue, ending the disturbance of electrical flow to the heart and restoring a healthy rhythm.

“I would recommend the Cleveland Clinic and its healthcare professionals to anyone,” Palmer says. “Whenever you have an ablation, there’s always the risk for puncture of the femoral artery. This happened to me, and I lost a lot of blood. But the Cleveland Clinic took good care of me and made it right.

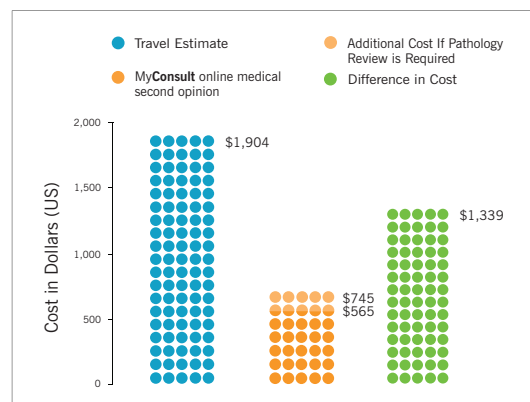
“The MyConsult service was not only thorough, but it opened the door for me to find the kind of help I wanted,” he notes. “After an ablation, it takes two months for the heart to heal. I’m almost at that two-month point. Then I’ll get back to running. MyConsult opened a door and made a great opportunity available to me.”

The following average cost statistics of traveling to the Cleveland Clinic from Laramie, Wyoming is based on the demographic information of the previous MyConsult patient testimonial.

Laramie, WY to Cleveland Clinic (approx. 1,341 mi., 19 hrs 42 min)
Average price for two people traveling to the Cleveland Clinic:

\$1,278.....	Roundtrip Flight for 4 days
\$426.....	Hotel Stay 4 day, 3 nights
\$200.....	Food/Drink 4 days
\$1,904.....	Total Trip Estimate
\$565.....	MyConsult Online Medical Second Opinion
\$1,339.....	Difference in Cost

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Business Owner Saves Time, Money with Online Medical Service

With four young children and a thriving small business, William Scott does not have time to be sick. And he certainly does not have time to fly from Idaho to Ohio to seek medical advice. That is why he was thrilled to be able to use a convenient online service that provided him with a medical second opinion from the nation's #1 ranked heart center, Cleveland Clinic.

Scott needs occasional treatment for a heart condition called atrial fibrillation, which causes his heart to beat irregularly. But medical care takes time, and time is money – especially when you are operating a business in the tough economic times the nation is currently experiencing.

"I was happy to find out about Cleveland Clinic's online service called MyConsult," he says. "I thought if I could do this online versus traveling to Ohio, it would save me a big trip. As long as they have all my medical records, the doctors can provide me with a second opinion. By doing this online, I was able to take advantage of the best cardiac institution in the country without the time and expense of actually going there."

Scott and his wife operate a social work case management business out of their home in Deary, Idaho. With 25 employees, the service helps people access needed healthcare services. They are also starting up a related business, which involves renting out personal medical response systems. In addition, William Scott serves as an emergency medical technician (EMT) with a local ambulance company.

Scott, 42, first became aware of his heart problem years ago. "When I ran track and cross country in high school, my doctor told me I really shouldn't be running because my heart beat irregularly," he says. "But I ignored that because I had been running all along with no trouble."

Then one day when he was 21, someone gave him a hug and remarked that his heart made funny noises. "That's when I realized I should probably get it checked out," Scott says. "The doctors diagnosed the atrial fibrillation and treated it, and it didn't bother me again for a long time."

When Scott was 35, stress with work set his heart into an abnormal rhythm again. This time, his physician told him that he should have a cardioversion, a treatment for arrhythmia that involves sending electrical energy to the heart muscle to restore normal rhythm. After taking blood thinners for a month, Scott had the cardioversion. His stress subsided, and he went back to life as normal.

"Then this summer, my mother-in-law passed away while she was visiting us," says Scott. "That, combined with a lack of sleep, set my heart into arrhythmia again. I recognized the problem, and since I'm an EMT, I went into the ambulance and did an EKG on myself. The doctor's office was pretty surprised when I walked in and told them I needed treatment for my atrial fibrillation."

When the physician recommended another cardioversion, Scott hesitated. "This would be the third time I had a cardioversion," he says. "My mother said I should check out Cleveland Clinic because she had a friend who was helped by Cleveland Clinic doctors. This friend went from not being able to walk across the room to back to an active life."

While online reading the Cleveland Clinic Web site, Scott noticed a link to the MyConsult Online Medical Second Opinion program. This sophisticated, Web-based program is an extension of Cleveland Clinic's 80-plus-year role as one of America's most respected referral institutions. The secure, online program provides remote medical second opinions from Cleveland Clinic specialists for more than 1,000 life-threatening and life-altering diagnoses.

"MyConsult is perfect for me because it's all done online and you don't have to actually travel to Cleveland Clinic," he says. "The only difficulty I had was getting permission from my doctors here to move ahead with a second opinion. We were getting close to the date of the conversion, and I wanted an answer quickly. Cleveland Clinic sent back their report in two days. I was very impressed."

Scott had been wondering if he should have an ablation, a therapy that uses radiofrequency waves on the heart to cure cardiac arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats). "Cleveland Clinic said an ablation was not necessary in my case," he says. "They concurred with my doctor here in Idaho who said I should have another cardioversion. I showed the report to my local doctor, who said it was thorough."

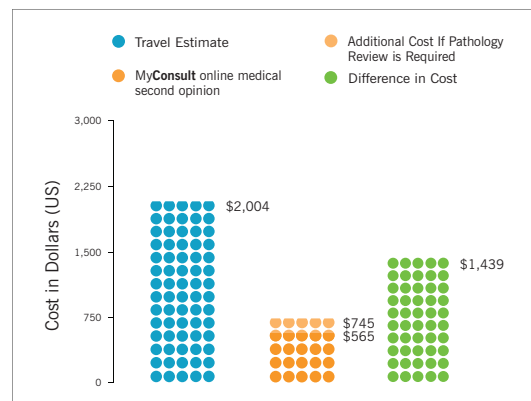
Being in the medical access business, Scott appreciated the ease of the MyConsult program to gain online remote access to Cleveland Clinic's experts. After having the cardioversion, Scott is feeling fine. This is a big relief for his wife and four children, aged 3, 8, 10 and 14. In addition to operating his business, he is back to other activities he loves – spending time with his family and enjoying woodworking, gardening and his amateur radio hobby.

The following average cost statistics of traveling to the Cleveland Clinic from Deary, Idaho is based on the demographic information of the previous MyConsult patient testimonial.

Deary, ID to Cleveland Clinic (approx. 2,164 mi.)
Average price for two people traveling to the Cleveland Clinic:

\$1,378.....	Roundtrip Flight for 4 days
\$426.....	Hotel Stay 4 day, 3 nights
\$200.....	Food/Drink 4 days
\$2,004.....	Total Trip Estimate
\$565.....	MyConsult Online Medical Second Opinion
\$1,439.....	Difference in Cost

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