ER Nurse to Make Lifesaving Donation

Albany, Ga. – As a registered nurse in Phoebe’s main emergency room and a former paramedic, Easton Glover is accustomed to providing lifesaving care in high-pressure situations. “ER nurses are a different kind of people, I guess you’d say. We have to be really calm under pressure. It takes a different mindset to be able to handle ten situations at the same time. You have to be quick on your feet and handle a fast pace,” Glover said.

Next week, Glover will provide a different kind of lifesaving treatment when he donates bone marrow to a woman half a world away, who likely will not survive without Glover’s gift. “It was pretty shocking when I found out I was a match. It has to be a perfect match, and that’s kind of like hitting the lottery,” he said.

Glover first joined the Be The Match Registry eight years ago to see if he could be that winning lottery ticket for someone who needed a bone marrow transplant. He simply submitted a cheek swab. For the vast majority of registrants, that’s the end of the process, but six years later Glover got a call saying that his blood was the perfect match for a woman in Europe who had cancer. Unfortunately, her condition deteriorated, and she wasn’t healthy enough to go through the transplant process then.

Recently, Glover got another call informing him that same patient was still alive and still in need of his bone marrow. Glover immediately said he was willing to donate. “It’s pretty exciting to be able to help somebody you don’t even know.”

That patient in Europe is currently undergoing high-dose chemotherapy treatment that essentially destroys her blood cells. If Glover were to back out now, she would almost certainly die, but he is fully committed to following through. Glover is donating through a process called peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) donation. For five days leading up to his donation, he must take injections of a drug that will drastically increase the number of blood-forming cells in his bloodstream. Donors often experience severe headaches,
bone and muscle pain and fatigue. “If I only have to go through five days of pain for somebody else to have a long life, it’s really nothing,” he said. “You’re somebody’s cure to whatever sickness they may have.”

Next week, Glover will travel to a specialized clinic in Boca Raton, FL where his donation will occur. In a process called apheresis, his blood will be removed through a needle in one arm. It will pass through a machine that will collect only the blood-forming cells, then the remaining blood will be returned to his body through a needle in his other arm. As soon as that 6-8 hour process is complete, his donated cells will be rushed to a hospital in Europe where, within 36 hours of his donation, they will be transplanted into the recipient.

“After she receives my blood, she’ll be in isolation for 100 days in the hospital, and it either takes or it doesn’t. If it takes they may ask me to donate again.” Glover said he would not hesitate to go through the process a second time if it could help the patient recover. Due to privacy laws in the recipient’s home country, Glover will never know her identity, but he looks forward to sending her a letter. She is allowed to write back, if she chooses, and he hopes she does.

Glover isn’t looking for attention or a pat on the back. He only agreed to speak publicly about his donation to encourage others to consider signing up as potential donors. “The main thing is getting people to learn about the Be The Match Registry,” he said. “I really want it to be about people registering, so they could possibly be somebody’s cure.”

Research shows younger donors provide the greatest chance for transplant success, so Be The Match focuses on recruiting registry members ages 18 – 44, but they will accept registrants up to age 60. You can learn more www.bethematch.org.

Glover is excited about his chance to save a life through his donation, and he is optimistic it will be a success. He looks forward to getting right back to work in Phoebe’s ER and saving more lives here in southwest Georgia. “The ER is my home. I love working here, and I wouldn’t go anywhere else.”

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