

From Paralyzed to Purpose: TCI's Martha Parker Walks Again After Life-Saving Surgery at Health City Cayman Islands

GRAND CAYMAN, CAYMAN ISLANDS, September 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Just months ago, Turks and Caicos Islands' beloved community figure, Martha Parker, lay motionless in a hospital bed, paralyzed from the neck down and fighting for her life. Today, she's walking again — and giving all glory to God and the team at Health City Cayman Islands.

Parker, well known in TCI for her culinary talents and community spirit, was airlifted to Health City in October after suddenly becoming quadriplegic — unable to move any of her limbs. What began as pain in her right leg, hip and back, followed by weakness, quickly escalated to total immobility, alarming both her family and local doctors. Despite multiple hospital visits in Providenciales, her condition deteriorated rapidly. After expressing worsening pain and telling her daughter she felt like she was dying, Parker lost consciousness at home, prompting an emergency airlift.

"I was very sick and then they (flew) me out to Health City," Parker recalled. "When I did wake up, I was in Cayman ... I was in the ICU for three weeks not knowing where I was."

"I was scared. I had lost all hope," said her daughter, Sharonna Walkin-Brown, who accompanied her to Grand Cayman. "I saw her deteriorate — from someone who was actually walking and talking and cooking to someone who was just laying there speechless, couldn't say anything and couldn't move."

At Health City, neurosurgeon and spine surgeon Dr. Manjunatha Kandala diagnosed a severe spinal infection that had originated from a urinary tract infection. Despite initial treatment, the infection had spread to her cervical spine, causing significant spinal cord compression and sepsis — ultimately resulting in quadriplegia.

"She had significant cord compression where she required surgery," noted Dr. Manju, who has extensive experience in different subspecialties of neurosurgery. "If it had not been identified on a timely basis and not addressed, she would have succumbed." The neurosurgeon confirmed that Parker recovered well after surgery: "So she came out of the ventilator pretty soon and she started responding by moving her upper limbs (first), then the lower limbs."

The emergency surgery was high-risk. "They had found that infection had built up around her

spine ... in the area of her neck," Walkin-Brown said. "He explained to me that the surgery ... was a really risky surgery and she only had about ... 20 percent chance that she would've made it."

Parker survived the surgery, which successfully relieved pressure on her spinal cord. Afterward, doctors identified the urinary tract organism responsible for the spinal infection and treated it with the appropriate antibiotic. Her recovery, however, was long and difficult. "When I was first going to physio ... oh boy, that was something else. Pain. Pain," she said. "I couldn't raise my hand, I couldn't raise my leg. And when they (began) to exercise me, it was so painful. I would cry so much."

Her months-long recovery at Health City was both physically and emotionally demanding, but she was surrounded by compassionate staff who supported her every step of the way. "They cry when I cry. When I laugh, they laugh with me," she said. "Sometimes they're busy, but they just would come and just pull my big toe to let me know that they are there for me."

With support from her family — including her children and grandchildren who flew in from Turks and Caicos and the United Kingdom — Parker described her improved mobility: "I feel so free that I could move around ... feeling like Martha again."

Her daughter added, "Just to know where she came from and to see her where she is today ... there's no price that can be put on that."

Parker is eager to return to her passions. "(I'd) like to go back and start doing my famous 'bake chicken'. I look forward to that and I know with the help of God, I'm gonna do that," she said. She also plans to give thanks in church, alongside her five children, for her miraculous recovery. "Every morning I wake up, I sing this song — 'Your grace and your mercy brought me through.' Only through the grace of God I know that I'm here today."

Parker praises Health City unequivocally: "If I was to recommend any hospital, I would say, go to Health City. I would choose Health City (as) my first choice because they care for you. You could feel it."

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