**Daredevil Urges Payton to Head South for Liver Transplant**

*Posted: Tuesday February 09, 1999 08:38 PM*

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|   | t1_payton_ap_01Walter Payton will not survive if he doesn't get a liver transplant. AP |

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) - Evel Knievel called Walter Payton and suggested he come to Florida, saying the Chicago Bears Hall of Famer could get on a shorter list to receive a new liver transplant.

"I said, 'I don't care where you've been, who you've seen or what you've done. All I want is to tell you I love you and I want you to come down and see Dr. Ramos and LifeLink,'" Knievel said Tuesday.

Knievel said Payton agreed to send blood profile information right away.

Knievel, who waited eight months for his transplant, thinks Payton would be on a shorter wait list through Tampa-based LifeLink than in more highly populated areas where the wait can be up to three years. Payton has been told he could die within two years if he does not receive a transplant.

Payton, 44, was diagnosed with primary sclerosing cholangitis, which blocks the bile ducts.

Dr. Hector Ramos said how long a patient waits depends on a number of variables, especially degree of illness and organ match.

Ruth Duncan Bell, a LifeLink spokeswoman, said the program doesn't estimate how long a person may have to wait.

Both Knievel and Payton have O-positive blood, a common type which can both help and hinder donor prospects -- the former because it improves chances for getting a liver and the latter because the type is shared by thousands of other people also awaiting the organ. He is on a national list through the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

Ramos said he was pleased with Knievel's recovery from the Jan. 27 surgery at Tampa General Hospital.

"Thank God he's doing very well - a little better than I expected him to do," Ramos said.

Source: "CNN/SI - NFL Football - Knievel has advice for Walter Payton. 08 July 2009 <<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/football/nfl/news/1999/02/09/payton_kneivel/>>.