

# An Amazing New Ankle

Elizabeth Cozzolino is back on her feet after a total ankle replacement

**I**t was no joke when Elizabeth Cozzolino fell on April Fools' Day in 2012, breaking her ankle and dislocating her foot. Surgeons implanted a plate and 13 screws to repair her ankle. Recovery required weeks of physical therapy. The busy Richmondville resident, now 75, was fine for a while. In a matter of months, however, she developed pain in her ankle that was made worse while walking. By January 2014, she had to crawl up the stairs to go to bed.

## A New Procedure

"Mrs. Cozzolino had post-traumatic arthritis," says Briana Calore, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at Bassett Healthcare Network. "When this kind of pain and stiffness are not resolved with pain medications, cortisone shots and physical therapy, surgery may be required. And this was the case with Mrs. Cozzolino."

In 2011, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a new procedure, total ankle replacement, to treat patients like Cozzolino. Dr. Calore has received special training and certification to perform the surgery. In fact, she performed more than two dozen ankle replacements with Roger Mann, MD, who conducted the FDA trial to ensure the safety of the surgery.

Replacement relieves the pain and allows the ankle to move. Prior to 2011, patients like Cozzolino may have undergone an ankle fusion, in which the bones of the ankle are joined together. Recovery can take up to

## IS JOINT PAIN SLOWING YOU DOWN?



If you are experiencing pain in your ankle or another joint, call **607-547-3652** to schedule an appointment with an orthopedic specialist, or contact your primary care provider for referral.



*Elizabeth "Betty" Cozzolino can enjoy walks with her dog, Mia, after undergoing a total ankle replacement.*

three months and patients are unable to move the ankle after surgery.

## A Quicker Recovery

Another benefit of replacement is that recovery is usually quicker—it involves only a brief hospital stay, a few weeks in a cast and one month in a walking boot. "My surgery was fantastic," says Cozzolino. "I took little pain medication, and the people at rehab couldn't believe I could do everything perfectly with no pain. Dr. Calore did a fantastic job."

Being able to move around with no pain or restrictions is a must for Cozzolino. In addition to caring for her menagerie of birds, fish and a dog, she is also the director of the Schoharie County Council of Senior Citizens. "I thank God every day, and don't let anything get me down," she says. ●