WellStar North Fulton Hospital First To Offer Robotic-Assisted Percutaneous Coronary Interventions In Metro Atlanta

WellStar North Fulton Hospital is now offering robotic-assisted percutaneous coronary interventions (PCI), becoming the first hospital in metro Atlanta to offer the technology and one of only fifty sites worldwide.

Procedures are performed by our interventional cardiologists, including Dr. Hunt Anderson and Dr. David Jacoboff, using the Corindus Vascular Robotics CorPath GRX system. The CorPath GRX is the first and only FDA-approved medical device to bring robotic-assisted precision to coronary interventions.

Coronary artery disease (CAD), characterized by plaque buildup that restricts blood flow in the coronary arteries, is a widespread and life-threatening condition. It is the most common form of heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in America. Traditionally, PCI is performed as a minimally-invasive treatment for severe CAD. In this procedure, a balloon is used to physically open an artery blockage and help improve blood flow. After angioplasty, interventional cardiologists often use stents (small, metal, wire-mesh tubes) to prop open the coronary artery and keep it open following the procedure. While PCI remains one of the most frequently performed procedures in the United States with over 900,000 cases annually, the procedure itself has remained largely unchanged for decades.

The ground-breaking CorPath GRX improves on traditional PCI by increasing precision of stent and balloon placement, while also reducing radiation exposure and orthopedic strain to the medical staff. Sitting away from the X-ray source in a radiation-protected cockpit, the physician uses joysticks to control the interventional devices, including catheters, wires, balloons and stents. Additionally, the technology provides interventional cardiologists with the ability to accurately measure relevant coronary anatomy during the procedure. Combining robotic precision with enhanced visualization of the coronary arteries, the CorPath GRX transforms the way PCI is performed and should improve patient care – including less radiation and intravenous contrast for the patient, as well as fewer implanted stents.
WellStar Health System Cardiac Rehabilitation

Most people think that cardiac rehabilitation is just an exercise program... but it is much more.

Cardiac Rehab is a medically supervised program to help people recover from heart attacks, heart surgery and percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI). Patients diagnosed with stable angina, congestive heart failure, and other cardiac diagnoses are also eligible to participate. At WellStar, our Cardiac Rehab programs provide education, supervised exercise, lifestyle modification and emotional support to help patients increase physical fitness, reduce cardiac symptoms, and improve health and well-being.

Research has shown Cardiac Rehab works. For example, patients who suffer an acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) who participate in Cardiac Rehab have a significantly reduced 30-day hospital readmission rate (JACC, April 5, 2017). There is also a 45% relative reduction in death from all causes in patients after PCI who participated in Cardiac Rehab (AHA May, 2011). Other proven benefits are improved medication compliance, improved cholesterol and triglyceride levels, fewer emergency room visits, and improved dietary habits. Cardiac Rehab plays a critical role in providing continuity of care across the health care continuum at WellStar.

At WellStar, our cardiac rehab patients are individually assessed to review medical history, assess risk factors, analyze functional abilities and set goals. Ongoing assessments are conducted to ensure patients are making progress to their goals, educational needs are being met, and any problems or concerns are being addressed with the referring physician.

Our cardiac rehab team consists of Physicians, Registered Dieticians, Exercise Physiologists and a Clinical Psychologist. We offer a variety of educational opportunities for patients such as Heart Smart class (Topics include risk factors for heart disease, educational aspects of heart disease, appropriate exercise, heart healthy nutrition, and cardiac rehab overview), Heart of the Matter class (focuses on stress management, depression), Pacemaker/Defibrillator Support Group, Grocery Store tours and one-on-one dietary consultations with the registered dietician.

WellStar Cardiac Rehabilitation Locations:
- WellStar Douglas Hospital 770-910-6429
- WellStar East Cobb Health Park 470-956-0186
- WellStar Kennestone Hospital 770-793-7485
- WellStar North Fulton Hospital 770-255-2785
- WellStar Paulding Hospital 470-644-8030
- South Cherokee Medical Center 678-324-4499
- WellStar Vinings Health Park 470-956-0420
- WellStar West Georgia Medical Center 706-845-3563

WellStar Cardiovascular Network News Fall 2018

WellStar Kennestone Hospital Completes 500th TAVR Procedure

Ricardo Myang, MD
Amar Patel, MD

This October, the Structural Heart and Valve Program celebrated its 500th TAVR procedure. Recognition of the expansive support team occurred at WellStar Kennestone Hospital. Dr. Amar Patel, Co-Medical Director, took time to highlight all of the individuals responsible for the team’s growth and success. “I remember when being located in the basement of the Cancer Center and it was myself, Dr. Myang and Tiffiny Amos. RN. Tiffany was our secretary, scheduler, nurse, and data entry specialist. We saw just a couple of patients a week. Today, we are seeing over thirty patients a week on average.”

The growth of the program has required increased support from the Cath Lab at Kennestone. Cardiac ICU and Step-Down units. With this growth, a lot of importance focuses on the hospital team members. “Our patients come back after the procedure and cannot say enough positive things about their input experience.” Dr. Patel shared with the group as he stressed the program’s success would not be possible without their dedication and high-quality care of the patient.

The outpatient support system has grown as well. Lead by Program Director Karen Davis, MSN, NP-C, the program is now equipped with a Nurse Coordinator for each of the specific structural heart procedure therapies and overall program outreach. Multiple medical assistants and advanced providers round out the expanded team to provide support for a program that continues to grow within WellStar as well as growing and serving patients that are well outside of WellStar’s traditional geographical footprint.

Dr. Richard Myang, Co-Medical Director, shared his vision for the future of the program. “As new therapies become available, we will continue to be on the cutting edge of this expanding technology. We will expand our involvement in research and continue to be a regional leader in Structural Heart & Cardiovascular Surgery.” Dr. Myang continued, “We will soon reach our 1000th overall Structural Heart procedure when accounting for all program therapy volume. We are excited about the future and being able to provide these options for the patients we serve.”

WellStar Collaboration With Mayo Clinic

WellStar Health System, through its collaboration with Mayo Clinic, has access to the resources of the Mayo Clinic Care Network, an international network of like-minded organizations who share a commitment to better serving patients and their families.

WellStar joined the Mayo Clinic Care Network in 2014. All 11 WellStar hospitals and WellStar Clinical Partners are now included in the Mayo Clinic Care Network. Through digital technology, physicians in the network can collaborate directly with Mayo specialists and access a variety of clinical resources. Experts from WellStar and Mayo Clinic work together to further enhance the delivery of healthcare, allowing many patients to receive answers to complex medical questions, close to home.

Specialists across WellStar have access to Mayo Clinic’s knowledge, resources and expertise using a variety of electronic tools and services and can consult directly with Mayo Clinic experts on complex diagnosis and treatment plans. These tools and services include:

- eConsult: WellStar Clinical Partner physicians use electronic consulting to connect directly with Mayo Clinic specialists on complex patient cases, which is included at no cost to the patient.
- AskMayoExpert: All members of WellStar’s medical staff have 24/7 access to Mayo-sourced medical information and guidelines through AskMayoExpert, which is a web-based resource created for physicians and other healthcare providers.
- Health Care Consulting: Related to clinical and business processes, this relationship allows WellStar providers to accelerate patient care innovations.

WellStar has access to Mayo Clinic’s knowledge and expertise across all medical disciplines. Mayo Clinic specialists also work together to further enhance the delivery of healthcare, allowing many patients to receive answers to complex medical questions, close to home.

Dr. Hans Lee, M.D., Medical Director of the Heart Failure/Comprehensive Care Clinic, said, “The results of the Heart Failure Academy clearly demonstrate the correlation of hospital admissions/readmissions with the program.”

For more information, please contact Ceyn Kim, eConsult Program Administrator, at 470-644-0129 or at mayoeconsult@wellstar.org

WellStar Heart Failure Academy

The term “Congestive Heart Failure” carries a negative connotation that often leaves the patients feeling hopeless. However, with the correct knowledge of this illness and self-management tools, patients can live and lead a good quality of life.

The WellStar Heart Failure Academy is a free educational offering of WellStar Health System, designed to help heart failure patients, families, and caregivers learn more about managing the disease.

The program began in 2014, and is now available at five WellStar hospital campuses (Cobb, Douglas, Kennestone, North Fulton, and Paulding). It consists of four sessions to address understanding of the disease, to include: Goal setting for lifestyle modification changes, Nutrition, Medications, and Exercise/Activity. It also includes review of advanced directives, palliative care, behavior health needs, and community resources. The open forum allows participants to ask questions and share experiences with a team of collaborative, subject matter expert presenters. A before and after, self- care heart failure index survey (SF-12) is used to measure learning and correct misconceptions in real time.

The goals of the academy are to prevent readmissions, provide consistent heart failure education across acute care, ambulatory services, and home health; As well as provide educational tools and strategies to ensure patients and families are successful in managing their heart failure symptoms at home. To date, of the participants who completed the entire program (attended all four sessions), there have been no “30-day Heart Failure readmissions”.

Our Heart Failure Academy team consists of a Manager of Patient and Family Education, a HF Program Manager, Site Team Leads, and various content experts. We’re committed to empowering patients through education.

Dr. Hana Lee, M.D., Medical Director of the Heart Failure/Comprehensive Care Clinic, said, “The results of the Heart Failure Academy clearly demonstrate the correlation of hospital admissions/readmissions with the program.”

For more information, please contact Ceyn Kim, eConsult Program Administrator, at 470-644-0129 or at mayoeconsult@wellstar.org