

HERITAGE VALLEY COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Issue No. 10, Fall 2008

Open Heart Program Evolves With Implementation Of Minimally Invasive Mini Maze Procedure

Evolving - moving forward and making change is a major theme in the progression of Heritage Valley Health System's heart program. At Heritage Valley Beaver, we have been successfully providing traditional coronary bypass and heart valve surgery since 1994, offering our surrounding communities state-of-the-art cardiac surgery without having to make the trip to a downtown hospital.

Dr. Alexander Vasilakis reported that "many of our friends, relatives and neighbors have undergone heart surgery at Heritage Valley reflecting the confidence the community has in the open heart program. Three to four hundred cardiac operations are conducted yearly at Heritage Valley Beaver with superb results."

Along with Dr. Vasilakis, Dr. P. Scott Seibel and Dr. Philip Ovardia perform all of the heart surgeries at Heritage Valley Beaver. All three surgeons are certified by both the American Board of Surgery and American Board of Thoracic Surgery. The open heart program at Heritage Valley undergoes a continuous quality assessment by participating in the Society of Thoracic Surgeons database, a national quality initiative and the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council at the state level.

Our outreach to patients and the public takes physicians with expertise and passion. It also takes the right procedures to continue to save lives. That's why we're proud to announce the evolution of our heart program with the offering of a new minimally invasive heart procedure known as Mini Maze. The first Mini Maze procedure was conducted at Heritage Valley on October 2nd, marking a significant milestone in leading the charge toward the most advanced heart-healthy medical procedures in the region.

Mini Maze is a heart procedure for patients who have been diagnosed with a common heart condition known as atrial fibrillation, more commonly referred to as AFIB. The American Heart Association reports that more than 2 million people in the United States suffer from AFIB, and there are more than 300,000 new cases diagnosed each year.

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Dr. Alexander Vasilakis, Dr. Philip Ovardia,
and Dr. P. Scott Seibel

Seasonal Health Tips: Weathering The Flu Season



Every year, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized with flu complications. Of those, 20,000 are children under the age of five. Approximately 36,000 people die each year from the flu. The best way to prevent the flu, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is to follow their "3 Steps To Preventing The Flu:"

1. Take time to get a flu vaccination yearly.
2. Take everyday preventive actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. And when you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
- If possible, stay home from work or school when you are sick to prevent others from catching your illness.
- Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often. This will help protect you from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth if you are sick. Germs often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her face.

3. Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them.

To find out how to get flu shots, find a Heritage Valley primary care physician near you by visiting www.heritagevalley.org.

Source: CDC, 2008. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm>.

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Talking With CEO Norm Mitry



Fall is a season of change. At Heritage Valley Health System, we are constantly changing and improving our services to better serve our patients and community.

This issue focuses on Heritage Valley's Heart and Vascular services and the feature article is a great example of change, highlighting the Mini Maze procedure now offered exclusively in our region by Heritage Valley. Our open heart surgery program at Heritage Valley is now in its second decade and our outcomes are second to none. As medicine and technology advance, so do the procedures that our talented surgeons perform. And, it's right here close to home.

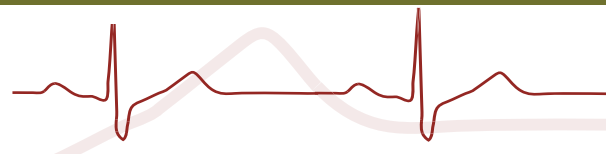
If you or a loved one are experiencing any heart related pain or illness, I encourage you to talk to your family physician. Your physician will be able to talk to you about the cardiac care provided at Heritage Valley and refer you to a Heritage Valley cardiologist if needed.

Norman F. Mitry
President/CEO
Heritage Valley Health System

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Focusing On Your Community's Heart Health Through The Heritage Valley Electrophysiology Program



It's a disease that impacts many people throughout our region, but also throughout the United States: sudden cardiac arrest - the single biggest cause of death today. Sudden cardiac arrest kills more people in the United States than lung cancer, breast cancer, and AIDS. What's more, nearly 95 percent of the people who have this disease have it once and die because the likelihood of being resuscitated if they have an out of hospital cardiac arrest is very poor.

That's why Heritage Valley Health System, and specifically our cardiologists, are focusing on the treatment of this disease by broadening the cardiac electrophysiology (EP) program within the health system.

Simply defined, EP is the study of electrical activity in the heart. Normally, electricity flows from one heart cell to the next throughout the heart in a regular, measured pattern. This normal electrical system brings about heart muscle contractions. A problem anywhere along the electrical pathway causes an arrhythmia, or heart rhythm disturbance. By accurately diagnosing the cause of an arrhythmia, cardiac electrophysiologists can select the best treatment.

"There are a number of ways we can prevent sudden cardiac death," said Dr. Leonard Ganz, a cardiac electrophysiologist at the Heritage Valley Heart and Vascular Center. "Medications have been shown to be extremely effective in different cardiovascular syndromes - like BETA blockers and ACE inhibitors and even statin drugs. Getting automated external defibrillators out in the community and improving first responder systems is also very important. And the other important piece is identifying patients who have heart disease who are at high risk for dying suddenly and getting them implantable defibrillators (ICD's), because with sudden cardiac death, the first episode, unfortunately, is usually the last."



Cardiac electrophysiologists like Dr. Ganz offer a number of different types of procedures in patients with heart disease and heart rhythm disorders. These procedures are offered at the Beaver Campus of Heritage Valley:

- **Diagnostic Electrophysiology Study**
Performed via the femoral vein, this test evaluates the heart's electrical system, and can be used to diagnose the cause of palpitations or loss of consciousness (syncope), or in some cases to predict risk of sudden cardiac arrest.
- **Insertion of a Pacemaker**
Pacemakers are used to treat patients with abnormally slow heart rhythms, which can cause weakness, fatigue, syncope, and even sudden death in some cases.
- **Ablation**
For many patients with supraventricular tachycardia and atrial flutter, and some patients with atrial fibrillation and ventricular tachycardia, radio frequency ablation can be the best treatment.

Community Laboratory Facilities

- Heritage Valley Health Center - Moon
Moon Township, PA • (412) 262-4161
- Heritage Valley Laboratory Draw Site - Hopewell
Hopewell, PA • (724) 378-7351
- Heritage Valley Laboratory Draw Site - Edgeworth
Edgeworth, PA • (412) 749-8312
- Heritage Valley Laboratory Draw Site - Baden
Baden, PA • (724) 869-1517
- Heritage Valley Laboratory Draw Site - Chippewa
Chippewa, PA • (724) 847-2335
- Heritage Valley Laboratory Draw Site - Robinson
Robinson Township, PA • (412) 788-0901
- Heritage Valley Family Practice Center
Beaver Falls, PA • (724) 843-6000
- Heritage Valley Women's Health Center
Center Township, PA • (724) 378-7000
- Sewickley Valley Medical Group Blood Draw Site
Leetsdale, PA • (412) 741-3367
- Sewickley Valley Medical Group Lab
Ambridge, PA • (724) 266-1261
- Tri-State Medical Group Laboratory
Beaver, PA • (724) 774-5030
Caltutta, OH • (330) 386-8855
Cranberry, PA • (724) 778-9303
Ellwood City, PA • (724) 758-2723

Hospitals

- Heritage Valley Beaver
Beaver, PA • (724) 728-7000
- Heritage Valley Sewickley
Sewickley, PA • (412) 741-6600

Outpatient Surgical Centers

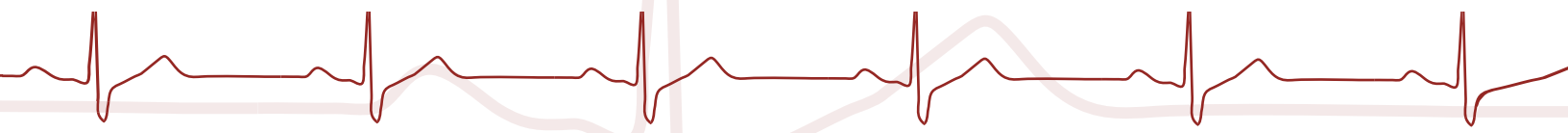
- Heritage Valley Surgery Center
Moon Township, PA • (412) 264-7721
- Surgery Center at Edgeworth Commons
Edgeworth, PA • (412) 741-1170

Outpatient Rehab Centers

- Signature Rehab - Beaver
Beaver, PA • (724) 770-0172
- Signature Rehab - Hopewell
Hopewell, PA • (724) 857-4000
- Signature Rehab - Chippewa
Chippewa, PA • (724) 891-4000
- Signature Rehab - New Brighton YMCA
New Brighton, PA • (724) 847-2791
- Signature Rehab - Sewickley
Edgeworth, PA • (412) 749-7178
- Signature Rehab - Thorn Run
Moon Township, PA • (412) 264-8917
- Signature Rehab - West Allegheny
Imperial, PA • (724) 695-8302

Community Satellite Facilities

- Heritage Valley Diagnostic Imaging Center - Thorn Run
Moon Township, PA • (412) 262-6464
- BusinessCare - Hopewell
Hopewell, PA • (724) 857-4004
- BusinessCare - Chippewa
Chippewa, PA • (724) 847-4417
- Heritage Valley Open MRI
Robinson Township, PA • (412) 788-0971
- LIFE Beaver County
Center Township, PA • (724) 378-5400
- Heritage Valley Rheumatology
Aliquippa, PA • (724) 857-0591
- Staunton Clinic - Edgeworth Square
Edgeworth, PA • (412) 749-7330
- Staunton Clinic - Bellevue
Bellevue, PA • (412) 734-5507
- Staunton Clinic - Rochester
Rochester, PA
(724) 775-5208 or 1-800-400-6180
- Staunton Clinic - West Allegheny
Imperial, PA • (724) 695-2411
- Staunton Clinic - Wexford
Wexford, PA • (724) 935-5177



The ablation procedure is usually carried out during the same procedure, immediately following the EP study. Typically, ablation can be curative in more than 90% of patients, depending on the nature of the arrhythmia. In many cases, catheter ablation procedures can be performed on an outpatient basis.

● **Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators (ICD'S)**

ICD's are superior to drug therapy in patients who have survived prior cardiac arrest or other dangerous ventricular arrhythmias. In addition, ICD's have been shown to improve survival in patients with significant left ventricular dysfunction due to prior MI or cardiomyopathy.

● **Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy (CRT)**

In many patients with moderate to severe heart failure, a sophisticated pacing system can lead to significant improvement in functional status and left ventricular function. Most patients who receive these devices are discharged home the next day.

"Clearly, two of the most exciting developments right now are primary prevention of sudden death with implantable defibrillators and cardiac resynchronization therapy," explained Dr. Ganz.

"Traditionally, we have put in pacemakers for patients whose hearts are too slow. Electrically stimulating the heart makes it contract and it brings the heart rate and rhythm back to normal. But in many patients with severe cardiomyopathy and congestive heart failure, they can have electrical abnormalities in the conduction in the ventricles and have very slow conduction through those lower chambers."

"We see patients who have weak, dilated hearts in whom this dyssynchronous contraction pattern of the ventricles makes matters worse," he explained. "We've learned that if you can pace the posterolateral wall of the left ventricle in addition to the standard sites in the right ventricle and right atrium, you can actually make the heart pump more efficiently. So this is actually pacing, not so much to correct a heart rate disturbance, but to make a sick heart pump more efficiently. We've seen some tremendous improvements in patients' exercise capacity and quality of life."

And we're very proud to bring these advanced capabilities to the communities that comprise Heritage Valley Health System."



For more information on the Heritage Valley electrophysiology program, contact the Heritage Valley Heart and Vascular Center at 724-728-3302. Office appointments are available at the Heart and Vascular Center sites in Beaver, Wexford, and Leetsdale.



- **Heritage Valley Diagnostic Center - Calcutta**
Calcutta, OH • (330) 386-8855
- **Heritage Valley Diagnostic Center - Cranberry**
Cranberry Township, PA • (724) 778-9303
- **Heritage Valley Diagnostic Center - Ellwood**
Ellwood City, PA • (724) 758-2723

UPMC / Heritage Valley Cancer Centers

- **Heritage Valley Beaver**
Beaver, PA • (724) 773-7616
- **UPMC West Building**
Moon Township, PA • (412) 604-2020

Affiliated Physician Groups

Sewickley Valley Medical Group

- 44 physicians staffing 19 office locations
- Specialties include internal medicine, family practice, cardiology, gastroenterology and pulmonary

Tri-State Medical Group

- 60 physicians staffing 27 office locations
- Specialties include internal medicine, family practice, occupational medicine, cardiology, geriatrics, rheumatology, general surgery and cardiovascular and thoracic surgery

Tri-State Pediatrics

- 13 physicians staffing 7 office locations

Tri-State Obstetrics and Gynecology

- 6 physicians staffing 5 offices
- Specialties include obstetrics, gynecological care, infertility, laser surgery, urogynecology, LEEP, laparoscopic surgery, water cystometrics, female incontinence, and minimally invasive gynecological surgery

Foundations

Sewickley Valley Hospital Foundation
(412) 749-7121

The Medical Center Foundation
(724) 728-9111

For more information, please visit
www.heritagevalley.org

...Mini Maze Procedure

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"The Mini Maze procedure can correct atrial fibrillation, which is a major cause of stroke," said Dr. Philip Ovadia. We anticipate the Mini Maze procedure will eliminate atrial fibrillation in more than 85 percent of patients who undergo the surgery."

The procedure is performed using minimally invasive devices all navigated by a miniature camera so that the physicians can see and operate on the heart without making large incisions in the chest. Patients can return to normal activity more quickly after the procedure and note less pain than with the traditional approach. In fact, hospital stays often are only two days instead of seven days or longer with conventional surgery.

"The Mini Maze procedure involves the use of thoracoscopy, whereby a video telescope is inserted into the chest and instruments specially designed for the procedure are inserted via small 'keyhole' incisions," explained Dr. Ovadia. "This means there are no divisions of bones or spreading of ribs. We're able to isolate areas of the heart where the irregular signal starts. The damaged tissue can no longer conduct electrical impulses, interrupting the transmission of the abnormal signal and allowing the rest of the chamber to resume beating normally."

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Calendar Of Events

November 23, 2008

- "An Evening of Holiday Shopping" at the Mall at Robinson, benefiting the Community Health Services programs at Heritage Valley. Tickets are \$5 each for entry and includes family activities and special discounts at select stores in the mall. Kids 12 & under are free. For more information, please call 412-749-7121.

To support our Foundations, please call 412-749-7121 or make a gift online at www.heritagevalley.org.

December 1, 2008

- Light Up Night - Heritage Valley Beaver Main Lobby, 5pm

December 2, 2008

- Tree Of Life - Heritage Valley Sewickley Main Lobby, 6:30pm

For more information about the above events, as well as others, please visit www.heritagevalley.org.

Physician Profile

Leonard Ganz, MD



Heritage Valley Health System extends a warm welcome to Dr. Leonard Ganz, a cardiology and cardiovascular disease specialist, who joined us in March 2008 as a cardiac electrophysiologist for the Heritage Valley Heart and Vascular Center.

Cardiac electrophysiologists deal with heart rhythm disturbances, and perform pacemaker and implantable cardio-verter defibrillator (ICD) implantation as well as catheter ablation and other procedures.

Dr. Ganz joins Heritage Valley from an impressive and comprehensive background that began at Harvard College and Harvard Medical School in Boston, where he graduated with an MD. He completed all of his medical training at Brigham & Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. He moved to Pittsburgh in 1997, initially to take a position at Allegheny General Hospital.

From there, Dr. Ganz joined UPMC, serving as Director of Cardiac Electrophysiology for five years. In 2005, he entered private practice in Pittsburgh, joining Barry Alpert, MD. Drs. Ganz and Alpert provide electrophysiology services at UPMC Shadyside, UPMC Passavant, Jefferson Regional Medical Center, and West Penn Hospital. Dr. Ganz is well known nationally as a contributor to Cardiosource, author and editor for UpToDate, and trustee for Heart Rhythm Society.

Today, as part of the Heart and Vascular Center at Heritage Valley, Dr. Ganz sees patients in three facilities - Beaver, Wexford, and Sewickley. He can be reached at 724-728-3302.

...Mini Maze Procedure

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In addition, the left atrial appendage, a fingerlike structure where clots form, is removed, and this significantly reduces the stroke risk faced by patients."

Currently, the most common treatment for atrial fibrillation is anticoagulant drugs, which do not address the abnormal heart beat; but instead, are used to prevent the formation of blood clots. Other treatments including catheter-based procedures and various surgeries are available. However, they are difficult to perform and carry increased risks.

According to Dr. Vasilakis, "The Maze procedure was previously conducted via traditional open heart surgery. But for patients with no heart blockages, it didn't make sense to go through the extreme of the more invasive approach. The new minimally invasive Mini Maze procedure is one example of the evolution of our heart program, and we're truly excited to offer our region this next advancement." Dr. Ovadia concurs, "This is truly groundbreaking for our region. There are only a handful of providers equipped to provide the Mini Maze procedure in our region - and we're pleased to provide it first to the communities within the reach of Heritage Valley."

For more information on the Mini Maze procedure, or any of the other cardiac surgical procedures performed at Heritage Valley, please contact Tri-State Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at 724-773-8289 to arrange a consultation.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

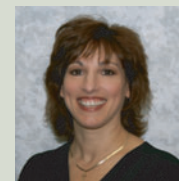
The Medical Center Foundation Board Announces New Members

The Medical Center Foundation recently welcomed four new members to its Board of Directors. They are **David Ambrose**, **Dr. Fran Ceravolo**, **Fred Clerici** and **Tammy Zelenko**.

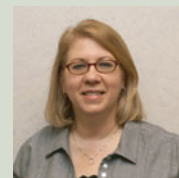
- **David Ambrose** is an investment advisor and founding partner of Financial Solution Services in Beaver. David and his wife Debby reside in Center Township.
- **Dr. Fran Ceravolo** is a retired dentist, periodontist, and professor emeritus at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. He and his wife Dorothy reside in Hopewell.
- **Fred Clerici** currently serves as Vice President of Group Management and Consulting. He and his wife Patricia reside in Patterson Township.
- **Tammy Zelenko** is president and CEO of AdvaCare Home Services, with offices in Beaver, Bridgeville and Pittsburgh. She and her husband Daniel reside in Moon Township.

Heritage Valley Selects Cameos of Caring Awardees

Heritage Valley Health System is pleased to announce the 2008 recipients of the Cameos of Caring Award Program. The Cameos of Caring Award is to honor exceptional bedside nurses who work in acute care hospitals. This year's winners from Heritage Valley are **Mary Ann Storch** from the CardioPulmonary Unit at Heritage Valley Beaver and **Becky Noyes** from the Critical Care Unit at Heritage Valley Sewickley.



Storch has been a nurse for 16 years. She resides in Aliquippa with her husband and two children. She takes pleasure in knowing that her patients and families have confidence in her ability to help them recover.



Noyes has been a nurse for 29 years. She resides in Beaver Falls with her husband and three children. Noyes enjoys the challenges of the nursing profession and the collegiality of being part of a larger team.