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News Release

Northwest Health System to launch The Heart Hospital Network

Progressive initiative with local physicians creates new model for cardiovascular services

SPRINGDALE, AR (July 1, 2009) — Northwest Health System is taking heart and vascular care to the next level by establishing The Heart Hospital Network – Northwest Health System, a “virtual hospital” model designed to align and expand cardiovascular care in the Arkansas-Oklahoma-Missouri region.

This physician-led “virtual hospital” model will integrate cardiovascular services at Northwest Health System’s hospitals in Springdale and Bentonville under the new identity of The Heart Hospital Network. Northwest has committed a significant investment in new equipment, software and facility renovations to make The Heart Hospital Network a reality. Initially, the project calls for the designation of a significant portion of the Springdale hospital’s north patient tower (Tower 1) and the Bentonville hospital’s cardiovascular services as core components of The Heart Hospital Network.

“Our goal is to integrate our efforts and resources to create a heart and vascular program that is comparable, if not superior, to those found at the most prestigious heart and vascular centers in the Arkansas-Oklahoma-Missouri region and the nation,” said Northwest Health System CEO Doug Arnold, in announcing the new venture. “When I came here as CEO in August, one of the first things I noted is that a metro area the size of Northwest Arkansas deserves a top-quality cardiovascular service like this. When I shared that observation with our Cardiologists and Cardiothoracic Surgeons, I found kindred spirits. Northwest Health System and its affiliated physicians have been leaders in heart and vascular care over the years. In fact, Northwest Health System performed the region’s first open-heart surgery in 1986. So it’s fitting that Northwest Health System take the lead on a heart and vascular care concept that is the logical next step for a metropolitan area of the size and level of sophistication found in Northwest Arkansas.”

The Heart Hospital Network

The Heart Hospital Network, initially will include Northwest Health System’s Springdale and Bentonville hospitals, as well as Siloam Springs Memorial Hospital. The network is expected to provide care to residents from a large portion of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri.

The heart hospital network model, which is physician-driven, unifies various services related to heart and vascular care. It is designed so that related departments flow together to create a synergy that results in a more “seamless” delivery of care. This model streamlines care to create maximum proficiency, following “best-practice” processes, with the patient and family at the center of it all.

The Heart Hospital Network’s initial development involves the dedication of significant portions of the north patient tower (Tower 1) at the Springdale hospital, unifying closely related departments. Following is a sampling of the affected departments:

- 1st Floor – Cardiac Catheterization Labs, Surgery and Surgery Recovery
- 2nd Floor – Coronary Care Unit (CCU) and other Intensive Care Units (ICUs).
- 3rd Floor – Pre/Post-Surgery/Procedure and heart/vascular patient rooms (all private).
- 5th Floor – finished space for future expansion. The 5th Floor currently has Guest House facilities for patients' families.
- In addition, a diagnostic cardiac catheterization lab will be installed in a new cardiac outpatient center in the Jones Clinic tower, providing the physicians greater capacity and access to perform diagnostic cardiac catheterizations, etc.

The heart program at the Bentonville hospital will be included as an integral part of The Heart Hospital Network. Process improvements derived from this new “virtual hospital” concept will be applied system-wide, to ensure that heart and vascular care is elevated throughout the Northwest Health System. The highly specialized Cardiac Electrophysiology Intervention Program will also be based at the Bentonville campus, treating atrial fibrillation and other arrhythmic disorders.

The combined resources of Northwest’s unified heart and vascular program (with three cardiovascular operating rooms and six cardiac catheterization labs), gives Northwest Health System the largest capacity of any such program in Northwest Arkansas.

The Heart Hospital’s leadership

Jonathan Clopton Ph.D., RT (R), RCIS, has been named Cardiovascular Service Line Administrator for Northwest Health System and will oversee the day-to-day operations of The Heart Hospital Network and all other heart and vascular services throughout Northwest Health System.

Dr. Clopton, who is a Registered Radiologic Technologist and a Registered Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist, holds a bachelor’s degree in Radiography from the University of Central Arkansas in Conway; a master’s degree in Radiologic Science from Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas; and a doctorate in Health Administration from Kennedy-Western University in Agoura Hills, Calif.

His healthcare career includes positions in Arkansas (Fort Smith, Springdale and Arkansas Heart Hospital in Little Rock). The Heart Hospital Network, like Arkansas’ first free-standing diagnostic cardiac catheterization lab (where Dr. Clopton worked during his tenure in Little Rock), will be designed to optimize patient flow, satisfaction and outcomes.

Prior to being named Cardiovascular Service Line Administrator for Northwest Health System in April, he had served as Director of Cardiac Services at Northwest Medical Center – Springdale.

Technology, information and quality

Technology and information will be primary drivers of quality-management in The Heart Hospital Network’s efforts to establish itself as one of the leading heart and vascular programs in the state and region. A few key elements:

- The Heart Hospital Network will monitor quality through participation in national registry databases that allow it to benchmark itself with other participating hospitals throughout the nation and glean best-practices from other top-performing programs. At present, no other heart and vascular program in Northwest Arkansas participates in these respected national registry databases.
- The Heart Hospital Network also will work with the American Heart Association (AHA) to become a “Get with the Guidelines” program. The “Get with the Guidelines” initiatives align

the hospital with the AHA goals for providing top-quality cardiac care. Currently, no heart and vascular service in Northwest Arkansas participates in this AHA program.

- The Heart Hospital Network will obtain the prestigious Chest Pain Accreditation of the Society of Chest Pain Centers. This accreditation certifies that recipients follow the Society's high standards for management of cardiovascular patients.
- A significant investment in equipment and software, including:
 - An upgrade of the network's hemodynamic systems (at the Springdale and Bentonville campuses), enabling automated data abstraction, for quality-assurance and patient-safety purposes.
 - Installation of two state-of-the-art new technology flat detector cardiac catheterization labs, which will provide top-quality cardiac imaging and safe intervention.
 - An upgrade to an intravascular ultrasound system, which allows for visualization of vascular structures with ultrasound technology.
 - An upgrade of the program's patient-monitoring and telemetry equipment, for maximized patient safety.
 - Private room renovations.
 - System-wide installation of an electronic EKG (electrocardiogram) management system, which allows physicians to remotely access EKG information via computers.
 - Installation of a dedicated Bluetooth EKG system to support the formation of a physician-led team and regional network to improve processes surrounding the diagnosis and treatment of acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) in the region. A focal point of this effort is the deployment of a 12-lead EKG system, in cooperation with first-responder/EMS (emergency medical services) agencies throughout the region to aid in rapid diagnosis. No such network currently exists in Northwest Arkansas.

The Heart Hospital's medical staff

The Heart Hospital's medical staff includes some of Northwest Arkansas' most respected physicians, including:

Cardiology:

- **Boris Bogomilov, M.D.** – Cardiologist and certified Electrophysiologist.
- **Joel D. Carver, M.D., FACC** – Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist.
- **David A. Churchill, M.D., FACC, FSCAI** – Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist.
- **Amr G. El-Shafei, M.D., FACC** – Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist.
- **Ted J. Fish, M.D., FACC** – Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist.
- **Michael D. Green, M.D., FACC** – Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist.
- **James A.S. Haisten, M.D.** – Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist.
- **Jamon R. Pruitt, M.D., FACC** – Invasive/Non-Invasive Cardiologist/Interventional.
- **Philip Riley, D.O.** – Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist.
- **Christopher Simpson, M.D., FACC** – Invasive/Interventional Cardiologist.

Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery:

- **James C. Counce, M.D.** – Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgeon.
- **J. Russell Davis, M.D.** – Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgeon. Dr. Davis performed Northwest Arkansas' first minimally invasive mitral valve repair and Mini-Maze procedure for atrial fibrillation ablation.
- **John B. Weiss, M.D.** – Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgeon. Dr. Weiss performed Northwest Arkansas' first open-heart surgery in 1986.
- **Russell H. Wood, M.D.** – Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgeon.

Hospitals and physicians who have an interest in participating in The Heart Hospital Network or would like more information may contact Dr. Clopton at **(479) 757-4244**.

- 30 -