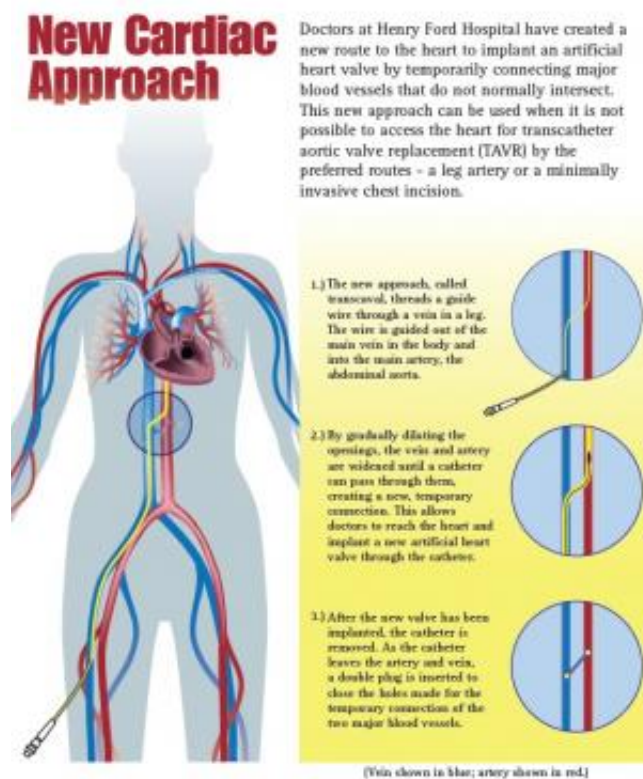


Henry Ford Hospital hits new heart valve surgery milestone

April 14 2014



Henry Ford is the only hospital in the United States performing the unique procedure called transcaval valve replacement, which accesses the heart by temporarily connecting major blood vessels. Credit: Henry Ford Health System

Doctors at Henry Ford Hospital reached a medical milestone April 3, performing the 25th successful transcatheter valve replacement using a

novel way to access the heart.

Henry Ford is the only hospital in the United States performing the unique procedure called transcaval valve replacement, which accesses the [heart](#) by temporarily connecting major blood vessels.

Northern Michigan resident Viola Waller, 80, underwent Henry Ford's first transcaval procedure on July 3, 2013 when traditional valve replacement was not medically viable.

"Nobody could help me here," the mother of three, grandmother of five and great-grandmother of three said Thursday from her home in Charlevoix. "I'm doing great – I really am. If I hadn't had it done, I wouldn't have had a future. I'm very happy I had it done. And I think I got the best care possible."

William O'Neill, M.D., medical director of Henry Ford's Center for Structural Heart Disease, says the milestone brings a message of hope for other potential patients in Michigan and across the country.

"The success of this approach offers a new route for heart valve patients who may be out of options," Dr. O'Neill says, estimating this procedure could help 25,000 to 50,000 patients annually.

During transcaval [valve replacement](#), a wire is guided into a leg and up through the femoral vein. By gradual dilation, an opening between the vein and artery is then widened to the point of allowing a catheter to connect them, continue to the heart, and implant the new artificial aortic heart valve.

As the catheter is removed, plugs are inserted in the artery and the vein to close the holes made for the temporary connection of the two major blood vessels.

Robert Lederman, M.D., an interventional cardiologist at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, developed the transcaval technique in a research setting. He came to Henry Ford in July 2013 to observe the initial procedure and share his insights.

"It is a wonderful feeling to hear about this milestone for transcaval catheterization," says Lederman, who continues to visit Henry Ford monthly from his office at the National Institutes of Health, to work on pioneering cardiac research and consult during case conferences with Henry Ford physicians. "I remember watching the first successful transcaval operation at Henry Ford last year, and to know that two dozen more patients have now been successfully treated, with more on the horizon, is truly rewarding."

Dr. Adam Greenbaum, M.D., director of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab at Henry Ford Hospital, led the team who performed the first procedure at Henry Ford. He worked alongside O'Neill, Henry Ford Interventional Cardiologist Mayra Guerrero, M.D. and Gaetano Paone, M.D., Division Head of Cardiac Surgery at Henry Ford Hospital.

Approximately 5 million people in the U.S. are diagnosed with heart valve disease annually. With an aging population that is often too frail for open-heart surgery, more than 20,000 Americans die of the disease each year, according to the American Heart Association.

Provided by Henry Ford Health System

Citation: Henry Ford Hospital hits new heart valve surgery milestone (2014, April 14) retrieved 19 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-04-henry-ford-hospital-heart-valve.html>

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