



SPECIAL DEVICE OFFERS A BRIDGE TO RECOVERY

Wallace Drenzek, age 82, doesn't remember being connected to a ventricular assist device (VAD) following his heart-valve repair surgery in December, but he was for five days.

During a follow-up visit after a colonoscopy last December, Mr. Drenzek's doctor was concerned about his breathing and sent him to the emergency department at Baystate Mary Lane Hospital in Ware.

"They found that my heart wasn't working well," says Mr. Drenzek, who lives in Ware with his wife Sylvia. Doctors determined that his mitral and tricuspid valves were faulty and his heart enlarged, and booked him for surgery at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield.

Following surgery, "Mr. Drenzek's heart was unable to support him in the short term, so we used the VAD as a bridge to his recovery," says Dr. Daniel Engelman, the Baystate cardiac surgeon who operated.

Recovery from cardiac surgery can be challenging by any measure. For many patients, especially the elderly, the stress of surgery to repair blocked arteries or leaky

valves can leave their hearts in a weakened state, unable to efficiently pump blood throughout the body and further complicating their recovery.

A VAD is a mechanical circulatory device used to either partially or completely replace the function of a failing heart. Some VADs are intended for short-term use in patients following surgery or a heart attack, while others are implanted for longer-term use in patients with heart failure as they await a transplant.

The VAD used at Baystate is an external device, about six inches in diameter. It takes blood from the right atrium and sends it to a pump—Dr. Engelman describes it as a "spinning wheel inside a plastic casing"—which sends it back into the lungs for oxygenation followed by distribution to the rest of the body and vital organs, just like a healthy heart would.

Dr. Engelman says Baystate is one of only a few hospitals in Massachusetts using VADs in high-risk elderly patients. "We're confident that in appropriate candidates, this technology can improve recovery rates and save lives," he says.

BAYSTATE MARY LANE HOSPITAL CT SERVICES EARN NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

Baystate Mary Lane Hospital in Ware was awarded a three-year accreditation in computed tomography (CT) by the American College of Radiology (ACR).

According to Michelle Bonneau, RT (R)(CT), the radiology technologist who led the accreditation process, "The ACR gold seal of accreditation represents the highest level of image quality and patient safety."

"We are very proud of our CT team and the services we offer," says Dr. Edward Ostrowski, radiologist at Baystate Mary Lane Hospital. "Having a nationally accredited CT program is another way we can assure our patients and physicians of the high quality diagnostic care we deliver each and every day."



Baystate
Heart & Vascular Program