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Eric Ratica, Norwayne Band Director



Interventional Cardiology is **NOW**

Dr. Daniel Newton, Cardiologist at WCH, has a quote in his office from coach Vince Lombardi entitled, “What it takes to be No. 1.” While he draws inspiration from this fierce competitor, Dr. Newton knows that his battles are even more important. He’s not fighting to win a championship; he’s fighting to save lives.

“He (Vince) is one of my heroes,” said Dr. Newton. “He had a vision and he did his best to make it a reality, overcoming many challenges.” Dr. Newton sees his ability to perform interventional cardiology in the same light. “Every life is precious and when you’re dealing with the heart, every second counts. It’s the most rewarding feeling to be able to give somebody their life back, to allow them to continue to make memories and spend time with their loved ones.”

Bringing interventional cardiology to Wooster has long been a dream of the Wooster Heart Group. When

Dr. Cyril Ofori joined the Heart Group 17 years ago, he foresaw a day when this might be possible. “When I came to WCH in 1999, anyone with an acute heart problem or that needed an invasive evaluation, had to be transported out of Wooster for that care. With the support of the hospital board, administration and colleagues, we made plans to build a heart catheterization lab in Wooster.” They hired cardiologist Dr. Paul Moodispaw and opened the catheterization lab in 2001. Since then more than 6,000 patients have taken advantage of these services which include coronary angiograms, pacemakers, heart scans and simple defibrillators.

It wasn’t long before the Heart Group began making plans for additional services. “We developed a robust outpatient clinic so patients would not have to leave the county for cardiac care like stress tests and follow-up for pacemakers and bypass surgery or stents,” said Dr. Ofori.

They introduced “cardiac catheterization through the wrist which is becoming a much safer and much sought after way of performing angiograms,” said Dr. Ofori. “All the while we had our eye on the vision of one day being able to perform angioplasty and stents here in Wooster.”

That dream became a reality in May. The state finally passed laws that allowed a hospital without open heart surgery capacity to perform angioplasty and stents and Dr. Newton was hired to join the team. Dr. Newton is specially trained to “open up an artery as soon as possible after a heart attack and place a stent,” said Dr. Ofori. “Opening the artery quickly saves muscle and every minute counts.”

Eric Ratica knows the importance of “minutes.” The 38-year-old Norwayne Band Director was exercising on the elliptical when he began to experience chest pain, which he initially attributed to indigestion.



The Cardiovascular Institute Team (L to R): Chad Hartzler, Lon Smith, Dusk Rudy, Kelly Lorbach, Courtney Wellman, Marilyn Willkom, Darryl Manley, Lucinda Taylor, Dr. Paul Moodispaw, Dr. Cyril Ofori and Dr. Daniel Newton.

available at WCH

His pain progressed to “a cold sweat, shortness of breath and hand numbness,” and Eric knew “something wasn’t right.” Fortunately, they live only minutes from WCH.

At the hospital they did an EKG on Eric and “within 20 seconds there were like 10 people in the room and I knew I was in trouble,” he said. They took him into the catheterization lab and very shortly Eric had two stents in his heart. He was awake for the whole procedure. “When they opened up the stents, I felt immediate relief,” he said. “It was the best I had felt in months.”

Eric was one of the first patients to experience interventional cardiology at WCH. “I can’t tell you how fortunate I feel that they were able to diagnose and insert the stents quickly. They told me that very little, if any, tissue damage was done. If I would have had to wait another hour, who knows how

much tissue damage might have occurred.”

Dr. Newton reiterates his sentiments. “This is literally life-changing technology.” Bringing this specialty of interventional cardiology to Wooster was like “completing the third column of cardiology,” he said. “This sets us apart and allows us to take care of our patients and community in an area that is usually only available in much larger institutions.”

Bringing any new technology to fruition is challenging and interventional cardiology was no exception. “Interventional technology has been on our ‘needed services to provide’ list for about seven years,” said Bill Sheron, Wooster Community Hospital President/CEO.

They had to battle state regulations to make it happen. “It was a huge challenge to start this program,” said Dr. Newton. “The administration and hospital board went above and

beyond to make it happen. They worked hard to provide the support services, equipment and trained staff to allow us to be successful.”

“We can now literally diagnose and treat the patient in less time than it took them to be transported to another facility previously,” said Sheron. “It can save precious time for a patient who is having a heart attack.”

“We have seen WCH grow, over a span of 20 years, from having no permanent cardiologists to offering an interventional cardiology program encompassing angioplasty and stent placement,” said Dr. Ofori. “It’s very gratifying to see how far cardiology has come.”

“I have been around the hospital since before we had any full-time cardiologists in Wooster,” said Sheron. “We now have six, which tells me there was a true need.”