

Hospital, doctors create one-stop shop for heart, kidney care

Blackfoot — Doctors in Southeast Idaho who specialize in treating cardiovascular and renal diseases have partnered with Bingham Memorial Hospital to bring The Cardio Renal Centers of America, a revolutionary, first-of-its kind facility, to patients struggling to find coordinated care.

Bingham Memorial spokesman Mark Baker said this care facility — which benefits from the expertise of nephrologists Naeem Rahim and brother Fahim Rahim, vascular and interventional specialist Dr. David Shelley, and cardiologist Dr. John Lassetter — offers a new approach by coordinating and combining patient care for heart and kidney diseases in one central location.

“One hundred percent of the blood that goes through the heart also goes through the kidneys,” Baker said. “If one is not working then the other is affected and the traditional delivery model for both specialties have been independent.”

This means that a cardiologist treating someone for a heart problem, high blood pressure or hypertension might put a person on a treatment plan of some sort. And because of the connectivity between the heart and kidneys, the treatment plan may have an effect on the kidneys over time, Baker added.

“Typically, a person would also need to see a nephrologist, but by the time they realize such they may have started the beginning stages of kidney disease,” Baker said. “The heart disease led to kidney disease and so because setting up an appointment with a nephrologist can take several months, sometimes what happens is because of that lag time, people might end up with kidney failure and end up on dialysis.”

Baker said talk in the medical community has long circulated around the idea of creating a comprehensive care facility.

However, nobody has taken action prior to this center opening about two months ago.

“When the doctors began to ask how they could deliver their medicine better, they decided it would be better if they did it together,” Baker said. “So they’ve created this concept of a multi-disciplinary coordinated care model where all of the care specialists are working together in one building. This will ensure that complications are mitigated or eliminated.”

On Thursday, Bob Quick, a Cardio Renal Centers of America patient of Dr. Lassetter, will be having his 17th stent inserted at Bingham Memorial Hospital.

On Friday, the day after the surgery, Quick will be riding his bicycle to Ogden, Utah, with Dr. Lassetter and a few friends.

Over the last 13 years, Quick has endured two heart attacks and has had more than 23 heart procedures to keep him alive. He has advanced stages of coronary artery disease, a hereditary heart problem that caused him to have a massive heart attack in September 2004.

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Idaho State Journal
Pocatello, Idaho
Wednesday July 12, 2017
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Quick was technically dead for about three-and-one-half minutes before the paramedics managed to resuscitate him. Quick currently has 16 stents and a pacemaker defibrillator, and is the only male in his family to live past 55 years of age.

“Quick had open heart surgery and since then has had a series of procedures to literally keep him ticking,” Baker said.

Quick gained national recognition in 2013 when he was the first man with his condition to ride a bike from the West Coast to the East Coast of the United States. His goal was to stop at fire stations throughout the country to thank firefighters.

“If it wasn’t for the firefighters in my hometown, I’d be dead,” Quick said. “And so I decided that when I biked I’d stop at fire houses along the way and give them a hug. And tell ‘em all thank you.”

Baker said the Cardio Renal Centers of America is not a hospital, but is a proud affiliate that works in conjunction with Bingham Memorial Hospital.

“Bingham Memorial Hospital loves its doctors and treats them like partners,” Baker said. “All of our doctors, when they come to us with a vision and a drive for greatness, we embrace those things and we want to support them in these ways.”

He continued, “This is the first care facility of its kind in the nation here in Blackfoot. Call it a pilot if you want, but they have a great vision to grow this type of care, not just in Eastern Idaho but for the entire country.”

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