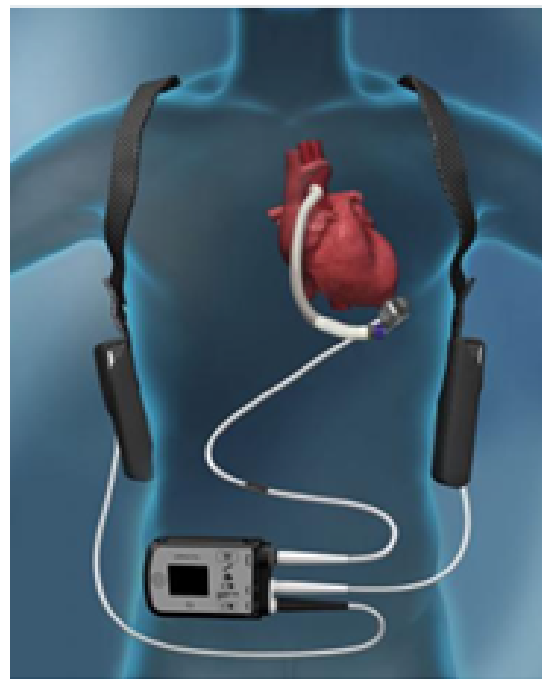


## Case of the Month: Advanced Cardiovascular Services

Welcome to a new series of clinical reports brought to you by Virtua Health. Once a month, we will share a case study highlighting the advanced, tertiary-level care services offered at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital. This month, we present Virtua's team approach to advanced heart failure involving a **left ventricular assist device (LVAD)** implant and a post-implant progress report.

### Background

This month's case involves a 73-year-old woman referred in March 2024 by Virtua cardiologist [Kevin Curl, MD](#). The patient had long-standing non-ischemic cardiomyopathy. She had developed worsening symptoms of heart failure despite being on optimal medical therapy. She was referred for a cardiac catheterization, where she was found to have severe, end-stage heart failure. The team determined that the patient required advanced therapy and was immediately referred to Virtua's [Advanced Heart Failure Program](#) for an [LVAD](#) evaluation.



### Intervention

The patient was evaluated for and found to be a good candidate for an LVAD. The specialized evaluation process involved the coordination of physical examination, testing, lab work, and consults led by the LVAD coordinator and a multidisciplinary team in collaboration with Dr. Curl. Surgery was successfully performed in May 2024 by a cardiothoracic surgery team led by [Dan Choi, MD](#).

## Outcome

The patient tolerated the surgery well, and within several weeks, progressed from the coronary care unit and ultimately to [Virtua's Acute Rehabilitation Center](#). She progressed through her therapy with a team that is trained to continue this specialized care. After a stay within the benchmark of care, under 30 days, she went home. She then completed a course of [outpatient cardiopulmonary rehabilitation](#). Since then, she has joined a gym, walks 45 minutes to an hour daily, and is back to doing what she loves to do with family and friends. She recently returned to Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital for a reunion with fellow LVAD recipients, and the attending staff were proud to witness her remarkable stamina and improved health.

## About Virtua's Advanced Heart Failure Services

In 2024, Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital was credentialed as a Ventricular Assist Device (VAD) Facility by DNV Healthcare, a global independent hospital accreditation organization. Virtua has already received a re-accreditation from the organization for 2025. Further, Virtua's [Heart Failure Program](#) sites continue to expand, having recently opened an office in Hammonton, with sites in Galloway and Ventnor opening soon. These join offices in Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties.



The Advanced Heart Failure team works directly with referring clinicians. If you have a patient who you deem would benefit from a heart failure consultation,

you can place a referral order to the team via Virtua's Epic. For referrals outside of Virtua, clinicians may utilize the one-call 24/7 clinician hotline at **856-600-1945**.

## When to Consider Referral

The Advanced Heart Failure team recommends that clinicians consider using the "rule of three" for timely heart failure evaluation: hospitalizations (two or more per year), escalating use of diuretics, and progressive intolerance to guideline-directed medical therapy (GDMT). They also employ the "[I NEED HELP](#)" mnemonic as a guide for timely and appropriate referral.

Our Advanced Heart Failure team is led by [Tolulope Agunbiade, MD](#), and the team always looks forward to meeting our community colleagues to share more about the service. Please let us know if you are interested in a visit by contacting the program's administrative director, Theresa Rowe-Ruffin, MSN, CRNP, at 856-886-6468 or cardiovascular service line liaison Lina Je at [lje@virtua.org](mailto:lje@virtua.org).

At Virtua Health, we strive to build collegial relationships and foster an environment of continuous learning and innovation. Do not hesitate to contact us to request a consultation or second opinion or have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Chun \(Dan\) Choi, MD](#)

Vice President, Cardiovascular Clinical Operations



Virtua

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