

Virtua Cardiologist Issue 4, Fall 2021

Medical Editor: Vincent J. Spagnuolo, MD, FACC

“I trust her to keep me alive and well to spend time with my grandchildren.” “You saved my life. Without your compassionate, professional care, I would not be here to offer these words of encouragement. From my first interaction at Virtua Cardiology to my discharge, I have nothing but the highest praise for all.” “Dr. Namey is the bomb. I love him, and I trust him with my life.”

These are just some of the recent positive reviews received about the care you provide, and is a sign of the continued strength of our program. Over the past months, we’ve notched significant milestones, performing our 1,000th transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) and our first vein of Marshall alcohol catheter ablation for the treatment of atrial fibrillation—a procedure that over time may become the gold standard for resolving AFib. And—breaking news here—Virtua’s Heart Rhythm team enrolled the very first patient in the U.S. into Medtronic’s LEADR (Lead Evaluation for Defibrillation and Reliability) trial. (See below for more details.)

We’ve also taken another step in our cardiac surgery evolution with the hiring of intensivists Hitoshi Hirose, MD, PhD, and Qiong Yang, MD. Drs. Hirose’s and Yang’s experience managing post-CT surgery patients will only improve outcomes and patient satisfaction. I am also pleased to announce that Hemal Bhatt, MD, and Yaser Alhamshari, MD, have joined Virtua and will bolster our interventional capabilities. We are also close to recruiting additional specialists to fill new roles within Virtua Cardiology. Stay tuned for details.

Enjoy the articles below, and as always, feel free to reach out to me with your thoughts and questions.

Virtua Heart Team Performs Milestone 1000th TAVR

This summer, the Structural Heart team at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital performed its 1000th transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR). Virtua performed its first TAVR for the minimally invasive treatment of aortic stenosis in 2013, and reached this milestone faster than many other centers. [\[more\]](#)

Vein of Marshall Alcohol Ablation Improving AFib, Atrial Flutter

The Virtua heart rhythm team is now performing vein of Marshall alcohol ablation as an adjunct treatment for persistent atrial fibrillation (AFib) and atrial flutter. [\[more\]](#)

Virtua’s EP Team First in Nation to Implant Investigational Defibrillation Lead

Virtua heart rhythm specialist Aatish Garg, MD, under the leadership of Darius Sholevar, MD, Virtua chief of electrophysiology, enrolled the very first U.S. patient in study of an

investigational defibrillation lead designed to treat people with ventricular tachycardia (VT). [\[more\]](#)

Meet the Team

Hitoshi Hirose, MD, PhD—CT Surgery Intensivist

Dr. Hirose joins Virtua Cardiology from Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. Dr. Hirose received his medical degree from Nagasaki University School of Medicine, and completed his surgical internship, residency, and fellowships at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital, New York. He completed clinical CT fellowships at Cleveland Clinic, Drexel University College of Medicine, and Jefferson. Dr. Hirose is well published, serves on many journal editorial boards, and is a frequent lecturer.

Qiong Yang, MD—CT Surgery Intensivist

Dr. Yang joins Virtua Cardiology from Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery. Dr. Yang received his medical degree from Jiangxi Medical College, Nanchang, China. He completed residencies and fellowships in CT surgery, pediatric cardiac surgery, and critical care at The Second Affiliated Hospital of Jiangxi Medical College, Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit, and Penn State Hershey Medical Center. Dr. Yang has presented at numerous medical conferences.

Hemal Bhatt, MD—Interventional Cardiologist

Dr. Bhatt joins Virtua Cardiology from Hackensack Meridian Health. Dr. Bhatt received his medical degree from St. Georges University, Grenada, West Indies, and completed a residency in internal medicine at Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn. Dr. Bhatt completed fellowships in vascular biology, cardiovascular disease, interventional cardiology, and structural and congenital heart disease at the University of Alabama, Einstein Medical Center, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital, and Hackensack University Medical Center. He has published articles in numerous journals.

Yaser Alhamshari, MD—Interventional Cardiologist

Dr. Alhamshari joins Virtua Cardiology from Einstein Medical Center. Dr. Alhamshari completed his medical degree from Jordan University of Science and Technology. He completed his internship, residency, and fellowships at Einstein, as well as research at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Alhamshari is well published and presented at many conferences.

AHA Recognizes Virtua Heart Failure Care

Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital has received the American Heart Association's (AHA) 2021 Gold Plus Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure Quality Achievement Award for our commitment to caring for patients living with heart failure. [\[more\]](#)

Virtua Cardiology Annual Meeting Postponed to 2022

Despite our best efforts, the Delta variant posed a worthy foe to our plans for an all-staff Virtua Cardiology meeting this fall. Hospital caseloads are currently about four times the rate over early summer. We have also seen our share of breakthrough infections. Therefore, we opted to

postpone our annual meeting to a time in 2022 when we can all gather together, in person, to meet our new colleagues and hear report outs from our lead physicians. Here's hoping for the new year!