

Getting at the heart of health care

Local physicians bringing education to Kenosha's doctors to help patients

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With heart disease the leading cause of death in Kenosha County, primary care physicians now have a direct connection to industry leaders in how to treat and prevent heart disease right in their backyard.

Two cardiologists from the Kenosha Medical Group-Zenith Health Care — Dr. Raaid Museitf and Dr. Indrajit Choudhuri — started the Great Lakes Cardiology Symposium in 2016 with the intention of focusing on innovation and technology for cardiovascular care and wellness. Held at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center in Pleasant Prairie on Saturday, 270 primary care physicians, cardiologists, surgeons, lab technicians and nurse practitioners attended the conference.

"We brought both national and international speakers so that they can come and educate local providers on the most up-to-date clinical practices," Museitf said. "We feel that by bringing that here, our local doctors are more likely to attend. They are also more likely to be up to date and we think the local community will get better care as a result of it."

Heart disease is a substantial problem in Kenosha County. The age-adjusted coronary heart disease death rate here is 138.6 per 100,000, compared with 126.7 in the United States, making it the leading cause of death in Kenosha County, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To empower medical professionals from the region, the conference highlighted a number of procedures, information on treatment trends and prevention strategies.

Access to experts

One of the main speakers, Dr. Tanvir Bajwa, a cardiologist in Milwaukee and clinical adjunct professor of medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, said primary care physicians having access to subspecialty experts is important.

Bajwa pointed out how advances in technology — like minimally invasive heart surgeries — used to only be done at larger hospitals like the Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic. But now they can be done at local community hospitals.

"So if the primary care physicians know that they can refer patients, then we can catch those diseases earlier and treat them better," Bajwa said.

Another trend, Museitf said, is percutaneous valve replacement.

"The old way would be to put people to sleep, cut them open and stop their heart, meaning that you would still have to



Dr. Raaid Museitf, co-director of the Great Lakes Cardiology Symposium, speaks at the symposium Saturday in Pleasant Prairie.



Podiatrist Cynthia Cernak, right, talks about saving limbs during the Great Lakes Cardiology Symposium, organized by doctors Indrajit Choudhuri, left, and Raaid Museitf, not pictured.

profuse their brain when you cut someone open," Museitf said. "That means you would have to put someone on a special machine ... and anytime someone has that happen there can be a whole bunch of complications."

The risks involved with the more invasive technique eliminated some patients from consideration for the procedure. The new, minimally invasive heart valve procedure lets more patients qualify for the surgery.

"Patients who we thought could never survive surgery, they could never have a valve," Museitf said. "We would just treat them symptomatically and they would just suffer. Now this new technology is treating those patients as well. But because

it's new, the information keeps changing and we keep updating it, every year."

Reducing trauma

The conference also touched on larger trends, including reducing the trauma of hospitalization and encouraging more innovation with the use of technology.

Dr. Allan S. Detsky, a professor at the University of Toronto and one of the speakers at the conference, likened hospital stays to prison.

"People come in. They are given a number. Their clothes are taken off. They are put in an outfit that is the same as everyone else's. The outfit is actually revealing and everyone can

see everybody's (rear end) in the back. People come in. They don't tell them who they are. They touch them. They ask them very personal questions ... What word would you use to describe that? Because I would call that a prison."

Detsky asked practitioners to challenge the system's approach to hospital care because it is traumatic to the patient. He also stressed the need for more innovation.

Detsky co-authored an article with Dr. Alan Garber titled "Uber's Disruptive Message for Health Care" that highlighted the issue of disruption and meeting patients' needs.

"Patients want a healthcare system that responds when

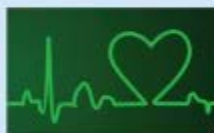
Matters of the heart in Kenosha County in 2016

349 Heart disease-related deaths

417 Cases of coronary heart disease requiring hospitalization

\$78,599 Average charge for a hospital visit for someone who had coronary heart disease

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services



5 things you can do to love your heart

- You are what you eat; watch your cholesterol intake.
- Don't smoke.
- Exercise. Do at least 25 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity at least three days per week for a total of 75 minutes where you have an elevated heart rate.
- Know your numbers. Simple blood tests can show whether or not you have high blood pressure. Most people don't have symptoms of high blood pressure.
- View your doctor as a consultant, and follow through with their orders.

care is needed," Detsky told the conference members. "What they want is to be returned to a good state of health, however they define it. They simply want to be better. And that ain't never gonna change."

Dr. Stefanie Ruffolo, a Kenosha Medical Group physician who specializes in internal medicine and pediatrics, said the conference helps her be a better doctor.

"It's really important to maintain the knowledge of what's out there," she said. "No, I'm not going to necessarily put in these valves, or the things that are being discussed. But I'm the frontline physician. A patient comes to me. They look to me to help them decide what direction to go now."