Lee Health Helps Patients Move Like Jagger

FDA approves transcatheter aortic valve replacement for low-risk patients

Dr. Brian Hummel performs 1,000th TAVR procedure

(Fort Myers, Fla. – Sept. 25, 2019) --- Following extensive clinical trials, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) surgery for low-risk patients. TAVR is a minimally-invasive alternative to open heart surgery for patients with aortic stenosis, and was vaulted to widespread attention when Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger underwent the procedure earlier this year.

Aortic Stenosis is a narrowing of the aortic valve, leading to a restriction of blood flow. TAVR had only been available to patients who were at a high or intermediate risk of complication from open heart surgery, and this FDA decision makes the procedure widely-available to a much larger group of patients.

In 2011, Lee Health was the second health system in the country to perform TAVR procedures, and was selected to participate in the FDA trials for low-risk patients. The team led by Dr. Brian Hummel, a cardiothoracic surgeon with Lee Health, recently performed their 1,000th TAVR procedure and the positive results shown during the trial helped open the door to FDA approval for low-risk patients nationwide.

TAVR is performed by crimping the new valve down to the diameter of a pencil and placing it on a catheter. From there, the catheter is fed to the heart through a small incision in an artery. The valve, which will begin working immediately, is then securely placed inside of the diseased valve. For a visual demonstration on how the surgery is performed, visit: http://www.leehealth.org/cardiaccare/treat/tavr.asp

“We are thrilled that more patients will be able to opt for this great alternative to open heart surgery,” said Dr. Hummel. “Patients undergoing a TAVR procedure are often ready to go home the next day and return to their day-to-day lives in days rather than weeks. The research shows that TAVR greatly reduces the risk of complications compared to traditional surgery, and this FDA decision is great news for patients.”

About half of TAVR patients are able to go home the day after their surgery and can expect to return to their normal lifestyle in five-to-six days. Patients having a heart valve replaced via traditional open heart surgery typically experience up to eight weeks of recovery. TAVR also has shown an equal or lower risk for complications such as heart attack or stroke in connection with valve replacement.

About Lee Health

Since the opening of the first hospital in 1916, Lee Health has been a health care leader in Southwest Florida, constantly evolving to meet the needs of the community. A non-profit, integrated health care services organization, Lee Health is committed to the well-being of every individual served, focused on healthy living and maintaining good health. Staffed by caring people, inspiring health, services are conveniently located throughout the community in four acute care hospitals, two specialty hospitals, outpatient centers, walk-in medical centers, primary care and specialty physician practices and other services across the continuum of care. Formerly known as Lee Memorial Health System, the organization began its second century of service with a new name in 2016. Learn more at www.LeeHealth.org.