

Cornwell Center for Cardiovascular and Diabetes Care opens at O’Bleness



Center is comprehensive resource for treating heart disease and diabetes

Residents of southeastern Ohio have a new resource for coordinating the treatment of heart disease and diabetes the Cornwell Center for Cardiovascular and Diabetes Care. The Cornwell offers a combination of services targeted at diagnosis, treatment and long-term care for heart disease and diabetes — two diseases often linked. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for the 17 million Americans who have diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association and the American College of Cardiology. Two out of three people with diabetes will die from heart attack or stroke.

The comprehensive regional center, located at the west end of O’Bleness Memorial Hospital in Athens, will open Monday, July 10. A feature of the Cornwell Center is O’Bleness’ low-risk diagnostic catheterization laboratory for cardiac and vascular procedures. These services previously were not available in the area. The catheterization laboratory is expected to open in August.

A progressive alliance of healthcare providers — O’Bleness, MidOhio Cardiology and Vascular Consultants (MOCVC), the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine (OU-COM) and OhioHealth — have been involved in developing the Center.

O’Bleness Health System president Rick Castrop said that by providing a convenient location and integrated services, the Cornwell Center will be a welcome benefit to the region. “Patients will not have to travel out of the area to receive quality low-risk diagnostic catheterization procedures,” Castrop said. “Patients with diabetes and heart disease will find it convenient to have all these services in one place. With the Diabetes and Endocrine Center located at the Cornwell Center, the opportunities for clinical care and research collaboration are significantly broadened.”

Physicians specializing in cardiology, vascular medicine, endocrinology, diabetology and internal medicine will have offices and provide services in the Cornwell Center, as well as O’Bleness’ cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation services. (see sidebar).

Heart disease and diabetes often related

The link between cardiovascular disease and diabetes is being addressed by having compatible services in the Cornwell Center. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the developed world, and the incidence of the disease in Ohio is almost two to three times the incidence reported in the United States. Diabetes is becoming a national epidemic, often due to poor diet and other lifestyle choices. Diabetes cases in southeastern Ohio may be almost twice as high as state and national averages, according to a seven-county survey by the Appalachian Rural Health Institute (ARHI) of Ohio University and the Voinovich Center for Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University. The mission of ARHI’s Diabetes and Endocrine Center Education Program is to reduce complications of diabetes in Appalachia and in southeastern Ohio through education and support.

Frank L. Schwartz, M.D., F.A.C.E., director of ARHI’s Diabetes and Endocrine Center and an associate professor of endocrinology at OU-COM, said ARHI provides diabetes education through dietitians and diabetic educators as well as clinical and basic research programs.

“ARHI also provides a state-wide outreach program involving development of standards for diabetes educational materials,” Schwartz said. “Fifty percent of diabetics have heart disease, making it a leading killer of diabetics, so locating our diabetes services at the Cornwell Center makes sense.

“Dr. Jay Shubrook and I can see our patients at the Cornwell just down the hallway from the cardiologists. Our diabetes educators will be right there to help patients understand and manage the disease. We will also continue our research programs through OU-COM at the Cornwell and plan to expand that as we develop new treatments.”

Dean of OU-COM, Jack A. Brose, D.O., said that OU-COM physicians and nurses have been providing high-quality diabetes clinical care and education — such as American Diabetes Association approved self-management programs — for some time now. “By combining resources in the Cornwell Center, our researchers, physicians, nurses and educators are helping to provide the residents of Athens and the surrounding area a new level of high-tech and patient-centered clinical care,” Brose said.

Diabetes educator Barbara Nakaniishi, R.D., L.D., C.D.E., said she is proud to be involved in the effort to provide diabetes education services in the new facility. “Diabetes educators help people understand diabetes, cope with diabetes and make the necessary life-style changes — such as meal planning, exercise and monitoring — to help prevent complications,” Nakanishi said.

Mitchell J. Silver, D.O., F.A.C.C., medical director of O’Bleness’ catheterization laboratory, said that “the Cornwell Center is an important development for patients in this region, as cardiovascular disease and diabetes with complications such as heart attack, stroke, and limb loss are a major cause of illness and death.”

The MidWest Cardiology Research Foundation, which is the clinical research arm of MOCVC, will offer Cornwell patients the opportunity to participate in clinical trials involving new devices for the treatment of cardiac and vascular diseases that patients may not be able to benefit from elsewhere.

Tom Murray, M.S., director of HeartWorks, said that the capacity of O’Bleness’ HeartWorks cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation program will be significantly increased, with much better physical facilities. He said he expects the program, operated in conjunction with WellWorks at Ohio University, will continue to grow. “The new facility nearly triples our current square footage, allowing us to exercise all our patients in one room, as well as adding new equipment,” Murray said.

Cornwell Center is culmination of years of planning

Research and planning for the Cornwell Center began in 2002 and construction for the \$3 million facility began in 2005. The Foster B. Cornwell and Helen W. Cornwell Memorial Gift of \$1.2 million helped make the facility a reality. The Cornwells were long-time Athens residents and Mr. Cornwell practiced law in Athens from 1935 until his retirement in 1995.

The project included renovating O’Bleness’ former Medical Office Building and constructing a 5,000-square-foot addition to house the first catheterization laboratory in the area. The completed facility includes more than 15,000 square feet of space.

Silver said cardiologists can now perform cardiac and vascular catheterization diagnostic procedures in appropriate patients locally. “Patients undergoing cardiac and vascular procedures at the Cornwell Center will be ‘low risk,’ which means they will be rigorously screened for anything that may increase the risk for complications during their procedure,” Silver said. “The experienced cardiovascular physicians performing these procedures have a high degree of technical expertise. Devices will be on site to treat any complications that may arise, and a seamless system for transport to Riverside Methodist Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, will be in place if needed,” Silver said. Specially trained O’Bleness nurses and radiologic technologists work closely with cardiologists to provide care and technical assistance during low-risk diagnostic catheterization procedures.

The facility features the same equipment used by MOCVC physicians performing catheterization procedures at Riverside Methodist Hospital. “O’Bleness has brought the very best high-tech equipment, as well as highly skilled cardiologists, to Athens,” said Rick Castrop, president of the O’Bleness Health System. The catheterization laboratory imaging equipment cost \$1.2 million, with an additional \$280,000 purchase for the monitoring system that views and stores patient information during the catheterization procedure.

Castrop said the concept of the heart and diabetes center began with discussions to identify what services were needed in the area and with economic feasibility studies. About that time there was a change in state regulations that allows a low-risk diagnostic cardiac and vascular catheterization laboratory to be located at a facility without open-heart surgery capabilities, as long as the facility is a hospital.

“Since the Medical Office Building tenants were moving to the Castrop Center, we decided that would be the perfect place to house the new facility,” Castrop said. “We added 5,000 square feet of space at the west end partly because we needed a higher ceiling for the catheterization lab. We also recognized the need to open more patient beds in the hospital, and that prompted us to relocate the HeartWorks program to the Cornwell Center. Then we considered advances in diabetes research and realized that heart and diabetes services would make a very nice combination.”

Castrop said future plans include a full-time cardiologist, which could lead to providing procedures such as inserting vascular stents and primary angioplasty.

An open house will be held for the public at the Cornwell Center Sunday, Sept. 17, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Healthcare providers move to new offices

A number of area physicians and healthcare providers have moved to new facilities at the Cornwell Center for Cardiovascular and Diabetes Care at O’Bleness Memorial Hospital.

Offices for **MidOhio Cardiology and Vascular Consultants (MOCVC)** cardiologists, **Mitchell J. Silver, D.O., F.A.C.C.**, **Anthony T. Chapekis, M.D.**, and **John F. Tugaen, M.D.**, have relocated from their Athens office in the Castrop Center to the Cornwell Center. The new phone number for MOCVC is **(740) 566-4890**.

Frank L. Schwartz, M.D., F.A.C.E., endocrinologist; and **Jay H. Shubrook, D.O.**, diabetologist; as well as nurse practitioners, **Barbara Pellegrin, F.N.P.**; and **Regina Reed, C.R.N.P., M.S.N.**; have relocated their offices from University Medical Associates (UMA) at Parks Hall. Diabetes educators, **Barbara Nakaniishi, R.D., L.D., C.D.E.**; **Suzanna Theodoras, R.N., C.D.E.**; and **Karen Bailey, M.S., R.D., L.D.**; have offices in the Cornwell Center as well. The diabetes educators are affiliated with the Appalachian Rural Health Institute (ARHI) of Ohio University. The phone number for diabetes services is **(740) 566-4880**.

The office of **Paul E. Cadamagnani, D.O.**, an internal medicine physician affiliated with UMA, has relocated from the Castrop Center to the Cornwell Center.

HeartWorks, O’Bleness’ cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation program in conjunction with WellWorks at Ohio University, will move from the second floor of O’Bleness to the Cornwell Center. HeartWorks will retain its current phone number, **(740) 592-9457**.

The Cornwell Center’s main reception number is **(740) 566-4850**.