

Blue Ridge HealthCare's Cardiac Catheterization Lab Raises The Standard of Care

Q Why did Blue Ridge HealthCare decide to build a cardiac cath lab?

In Burke County, deaths from heart disease are more than twice the national average. This 3,000 square foot ultra-modern unit is a giant step forward in raising the community's standard of heart care so residents don't have to leave Burke County for advanced diagnosis and treatment.

The cath lab also is a key installment in BRHC's plans for a Hallmark Service dedicated to reducing heart disease in the community.

The all-digital facility at Grace Hospital is a first for Burke County residents and for the health system. Previously BRHC's two hospitals, Grace and Valdese, only had access to a mobile cath lab that resembled a large tractor-trailer.

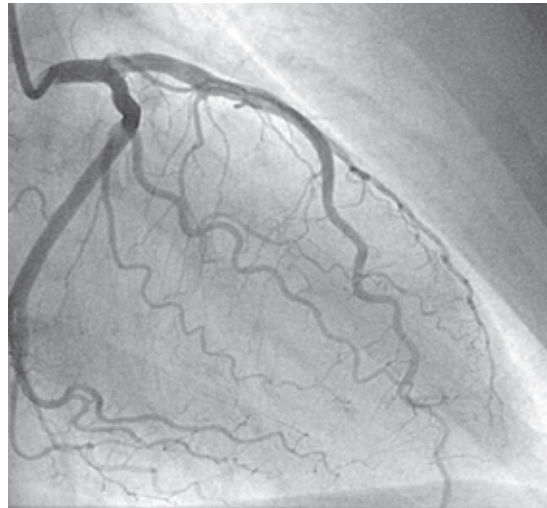
In addition, the mobile unit was only available two or three times a week at Grace and once a week at Valdese. The new lab will have regular hours Monday through Friday, and then be available for emergency cases at other times of the day and weekends.

So, the permanent lab not only offers some of the most advanced technology available today but also makes access to heart care more convenient.

Cardiac catheterization offers an excellent strategy for obtaining critical information before surgery or making a diagnosis. It is one of the most accurate tests in the diagnosis of coronary artery disease, and over a million of them are done each year.

Q Why do physicians order a cardiac catheterization?

This test will help the doctor to evaluate the patient's cardiac condition related to:



We see the whole picture on interventional cardiovascular imaging at Blue Ridge HealthCare's Grace Hospital. Our cardiologists are using the Philips Integris Allura imaging system to provide advanced treatment in the management of cardiovascular disease. The results can include better outcomes, more timely treatments and shorter hospitalizations.

- How well the heart muscle and valves are working
- The extent of damage to the heart after a heart attack
- Which coronary arteries are narrowed
- The extent and degree of the narrowing
- What treatment is required: medical management, an angioplasty or surgery

This test is frequently performed prior to heart surgery to determine if surgery is necessary, and, if so, what surgery is to be performed.

Q What is cardiac catheterization?

A cardiac catheterization is a minimally invasive test that offers clear, accurate information about the heart and the coronary arteries located on the surface of the heart.

To perform a cardiac catheterization, a thin flexible tube called a catheter is threaded

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■ The normal human heart is a strong, muscular pump a little larger than a fist. Each day an average heart "beats" 100,000 times and pumps about 2,000 gallons of blood.

■ In a 70-year lifetime, an average human heart beats more than 2.5 billion times.

■ Blood vessels carry oxygen- and nutrient-depleted blood back to the heart and lungs. If all these vessels were laid end-to-end, they'd extend for about 60,000 miles. That's enough to encircle the earth more than twice.

■ Since 1900 cardiovascular disease has been the No. 1 killer in the United States every year but 1918. Nearly 2,600 Americans die of CVD each day, an average of 1 death every 34 seconds.



Cardiologist Roger Seagle, MD, performs a cardiac catheterization recently in Burke County's first permanent Cath Lab at Blue Ridge HealthCare. The lab uses some of the most sophisticated imaging technology available today.

Q Who are BRHC's partners in heart care?
 Blue Ridge is partnering with MedCath, a national provider of cardiovascular services, to build and operate the new facility. MedCath, a nationally recognized leader in cardiac cath lab design, has overseen the equipment setup for the unit. Philips Corp., another industry leader, manufactures most of the lab's equipment. In addition, BRHC's partnership with Carolinas HealthCare, including MedCenter Air, provides access to more advanced heart services if they are needed.

Risk Factors

Factors you can control

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- Overweight and obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Diabetes

Factors you cannot control

- Pre-existing coronary heart diseases, including a previous heart attack, a prior angioplasty or bypass surgery, or angina
- Age- In men, the risk increases after age 45; in women, the risk increases after age 55.
- Family history of early heart disease-a father or brother diagnosed before age 55; or a mother or sister diagnosed before age 65.

To see video highlights from an actual cardiac catheterization procedure, visit www.blueridgehealth.org/cath.html

through a blood vessel. The catheter is inserted through a very small cut made by the physician in the femoral artery in the groin (or an artery in the arm at the crease of the elbow). X-ray is used to guide the catheter through the blood vessel and into the heart.

The physician tracks the course of the catheter by watching it on a fluoroscope, which displays the blood vessels on a viewing screen. Through the catheter, a doctor can measure pressures, take blood samples, and inject dye into the arteries or the heart's chambers to trace blood flow. X-rays show the blood flow. As the doctor watches the dye moving through the blood vessels and chambers, he sees whether the coronary arteries are narrowed or blocked from plaque build-up on the vessels' lining.

The patient, who has been given a mild sedative, but not put to sleep, can watch the procedure on the monitor if he wants to. The test takes about an hour.

Symptoms of Heart Attack

If you are experiencing chest discomfort or pain, do not delay. Go to the Grace or Valdese Emergency Department. A process is in place at both EDs to evaluate chest pain and determine the most appropriate treatment.

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath. May occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs: These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness