Another heart first
Ivan Head receives an alternative to blood thinners for AFib patients

Ivan Head considers his garage his retirement home.

The 69-year-old Harper Creek resident has spent many a day in his garage rebuilding older cars since his retirement from the Calhoun County facilities management job.

His rebuilding skills are temporarily on hold, however, while he copes with a heart problem called atrial fibrillation, better known as AFib.

It won’t be much longer, however, before he once again starts rebuilding a 1949 Chevy pickup for his wife, Gaylyn, thanks to a novel new procedure called the Watchman® Left Atrial Appendage Closure Implant he had at Borgess Medical Center in December.

Ivan was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation

Ivan has been diagnosed with Afib for several years and has been taking a blood thinner called Coumadin to reduce the risk of a stroke, a major concern for people with AFib.

Ivan said he never had any problems until late last year when he started having significant shortness of breath one day at home. He went to an immediate care facility, where a nurse listened to his heart and told him to go immediately to a hospital.

“Don’t walk in when you get there,” she told me. “Have them come and get you.”

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Dr. Vishal Gupta, Borgess Heart Institute, Director of Borgess Cardiovascular Laboratory, provided initial care and, later, offered Ivan the chance to have the Watchman procedure.

“It wasn’t hard to make the decision,” Ivan said. “There was no question in my mind about using the new device.”

Dr. Gupta said that the Watchman does not reduce symptoms of AFib, but over time, it eliminates the need for patients to take blood thinners to reduce the risk of stroke. Ivan is one of some 12 million Americans who have AFib, Dr. Gupta said, and the number is increasing.

**Implantable device acts as a barrier to prevent blood clots**

The implant, he said, acts as a barrier to prevent blood clots from leaving the left atrial appendage, a small pouch in the heart where blood tends to stagnate in people with AFib. Blood clots could enter the blood stream where it could cause a stroke.

Coumadin is the most commonly prescribed medication to reduce the risk of stroke. (Newer blood thinners like Xarelto, Pradaxa, Eliquis and Savaysa) are also prescribed.) These drugs increase the risk of bleeding, Dr. Gupta said, and Watchman offers a way to reduce the risk of AFib-related strokes without the risk of bleeding associated with blood thinners.

Some studies suggest the new treatment (compared to Coumadin therapy) may prolong the life of AFib patients.

Ivan was the first patient to have the Watchman Implant at Borgess. And while he is scheduled to remain on Coumadin until 45 days after the procedure, he said that he has no complaints.

“I feel great,” he said. “I couldn’t ask for a better day. Dr. Gupta did a heck of a job on me.”

Until he is taken off of Coumadin and starts taking a baby aspirin daily, he has to be careful not to cut himself or bump his head, Dr. Gupta said.

“Dr. Gupta has fixed me up pretty good, and as for the folks at Borgess, you couldn’t ask for a better bunch of people,” Ivan said. “I won’t go to another hospital. I came in one day for the procedure and walked out the next.”

Ivan said he has had a number of surgeries over the years—two knee replacements, surgery for a hiatal hernia and removal of goiters.

“They keep rebuilding me,” he said. “Just like I have been rebuilding cars.”

Michelle Miller, Nurse Practitioner, Structural Heart Disease Coordinator, Borgess Heart Institute, holds a Watchman® device by Boston Scientific that is implanted within the heart’s left atrial appendage and is designed to help reduce the risk of stroke.

**Learn more about atrial fibrillation**

Learn more about atrial fibrillation (AFib) by watching WWMT’s “Doc Talk” with Vishal Gupta, MD, cardiologist, Borgess Heart Center, who explains the condition and a new minimally invasive treatment. You can view Dr. Gupta’s interview by visiting youtube.com/borgesshealth.
Retirement seminars offered

Ascension and Transamerica Retirement Solutions will sponsor a series of retirement seminars. Two seminars will be held each quarter, including one from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2016, in MSB 335 (Medical Specialties Building) at Borgess Medical Center. Seminars will also be held in April in MSB 335: 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday, April 25; and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday, April 26. The seminars are free and associates are encouraged to bring their spouse or significant other. To RSVP, click on the Appointment Plus link: https://booknow.appointmentplus.com/7kxqtz6m/ or contact Kris Hapke, retirement planning consultant, Transamerica Retirement Solutions, LLC, at (269) 226.4914 or kris.hapke@transamerica.com.

Teamwork among nurses, patient care assistants and other providers of care has resulted in fewer patient falls at Borgess Medical Center.

“Each year, 700,000 to 1 million people fall in U.S. hospitals,” said Kathy Young, President and CEO, Borgess Health. “Members of the Borgess Falls Committee faced up to this universal hospital challenge with good ideas and teamwork. The implementation of their ideas resulted in improved patient health outcomes. Everyone involved with this effort deserves our praise and we look forward to continued success.”

Practical ideas based on communication

“Our Falls Committee Team Members came up with many practical ideas that were based on better communication,” said Rebecca McCormack, BSN, Assistant Department Director, Inpatient Behavioral Health, and Chair, Borgess Medical Center Falls Committee.

“One involved increasing nursing charting activities in our hallways so we are closer to our patients, and can hear and see more call lights and bed alarms,” said McCormack. “We also suggested each patient care unit create a ‘Top Five’ patient fall list every day. The list of these patients is shared at safety huddles and nursing reports. Because the individuals are highlighted, we all try to make sure patient items are within their reach to avoid unnecessary reaching, etc.”

The real winners are the patients

The ideas were put to the test with some friendly competition between patient units for the last quarter of 2015-October, November and December. The Falls Reduction Frenzy Tournament goal was to reduce the incidence of patient falls.

“Of course, our patients were the real winners of the safety tournament,” said McCormack. “The teamwork displayed by everyone resulted in an 8.5-percent drop in patient falls for the three-month period and a 26-percent patient fall reduction for the month of December compared to FY 2015 baseline figures.”

“Our Falls Committee has done an excellent job in reducing inpatient falls,” said Salman Halder, BSc, MPH, Coordinator of Clinical Patient Safety and Quality. “Borgess Medical Center is flirting with a statistically significant reduction at this point. If the current trend continues in upcoming competitions, we will be able to show impressive reductions in patient falls due to the efforts of our staff.”

The second Frenzy Tournament will measure patient falls for the first three months of 2016.

Safety

Teamwork reduces patient falls

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Vascular surgeons explain Peripheral Artery Disease

Borgess Vascular Institute vascular surgeons Sean O’Brien, MD, (above right) and Krishna Jain, MD, (above left) recently spoke about Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) on WWMT’s Lori Moore Show.

ASCENSION HAS ENTERED INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH EVOLUTION HEALTH, a division of Envision Healthcare (Envision), to form a joint venture to provide home care, hospice care and infusion therapy to individuals in communities served by Ascension. This spring, Reverence Home Health & Hospice will transition to this platform, known as Ascension Health at Home. As this partnership continues to evolve, Reverence Home Health & Hospice will provide updates. If you have any questions, please call Reverence Home Health & Hospice at (888) 246.6322.

“Of course our patients were the real winners of this safety effort.”

Rebecca McCormack
Chair, Borgess Medical Center Fall Committee
Borgess Health associates help many others on MLK Day of Service

Borgess Health associates teamed up with Bronson, WMU and other area community members to help local students and also took part in two health clinics for the underserved.

Called “Career Cruising,” Borgess Health associates and others provided career exposure to eighth-grade students at Kalamazoo’s Milwood Magnet School. Doctors, nurse practitioners, technicians and administrators shared information on how to prepare for medical care professions and background on their particular fields of choice. Borgess Health professionals also helped at health clinics held at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission and at Ministry with Community.

“I knew I wanted to be a doctor when I was 5-years-old,” said Dawn Owens Robinson, MD, Borgess Women’s Health. “However, most eighth-graders don’t know what they want to do and a little guidance can go a long way. Engaging with others can be priceless and I’m always happy to offer some health care occupation insight to curious young people.”

“Borgess Health associates can’t be thanked enough for the spirit of dedication to others displayed on the MLK Day of Service,” said Sr. Sue McCrery, Spiritual Care Specialist, Mission Integration, Borgess Health.

Pictured below: (left) Donna Funk, RN, Clinical Nurse Diabetes Specialist, shown sharing information with patients at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission, and (right) Dawn Owens Robinson, MD, Borgess Women’s Health, speaking with an eighth-grade student at Kalamazoo’s Milwood Magnet School.

Amanda Militzer, EMT, Borgess Life Support Instructor, AHA Training Center Coordinator.