St. Luke's Cardiac Care timeline

Aurora Health Care

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St. Luke’s: A Leader and Innovator in Cardiac Care

St. Luke’s Medical Center has had a long tradition of excellence and innovation in heart care, leading the way in development of both surgical and non-surgical techniques for the treatment of heart disease.

- 1956  Purchased first heart pump in Wisconsin, the forerunner of today’s heart-lung machine.
- 1960  Began Wisconsin’s first cardiac catheterization program.
- 1961  Implanted Milwaukee’s first pacemaker.
- 1968  Performed the first multiple coronary bypass surgery among Milwaukee’s private hospitals.
- 1968  Performed the Midwest’s first heart transplant.
- 1978  Began using a beeper system to monitor heart rhythms of cardiac patients, the first system of its kind in Milwaukee-area hospitals.
- 1984  Opened Wisconsin’s first cardiac catheterization lab with a multi-axis lateral system totally dedicated to cardiac procedures.
- 1985  Performed the Midwest’s first transmyocardial laser revascularization procedure during bypass surgery to restore blood flow to damaged heart muscle.
- 1986  Implanted Wisconsin’s first Jarvik-7 artificial heart as a bridge to transplant, making St. Luke’s one of a limited number of centers in the United States where the Jarvik-7 procedure has been performed.
- 1986  Performed the first valvuloplasty procedure in Wisconsin.
- 1987  Became Wisconsin’s first hospital to use the drug TPA for emergency treatment of heart attack victims.
- 1989  Became one of 12 medical centers nationwide to perform an atherectomy procedure.
- 1989  Performed the first successful coronary laser angioplasty in Wisconsin.
- 1989  Implemented use of a portable heart-lung machine in its Cardiac Catheterization Lab.
- 1990  Became Wisconsin’s first hospital to receive Medicare approval for heart transplants.
- 1990  Made available Wisconsin’s first external semiautomatic defibrillator system for home use.
- 1990  Performed its 100th heart transplant operation since initiating the program in 1968.
- 1991  Became Wisconsin’s first hospital to insert a “stent” into a patient’s coronary arteries to prevent collapse.
- 1991  Became the first Wisconsin hospital to implant the pneumatic Heartmate, a ventricular assist device.
- 1992  Initiated second phase of transmyocardial laser revascularization procedures on the beating heart.
- 1994  Initiated the first MRI cardiovascular research program in the state with a dedicated magnetic resonance Imaging unit.
- 1994  Became the Midwest’s first hospital to implant the vented electric Heartmate ventricular assist device, and the first to manage the care of a patient at home while his heart was being supported by the device.
- 1995  Became the first hospital in the Midwest to successfully complete a heart transplant on a patient who had been living at home while his heart was supported by a vented electric Heartmate.