

## DELAWARE HEALTHCARE PROFILES

# The Importance of Comprehensive Cardiovascular Care, Close to Home

**F**ebruary is American Heart Month—a time that reminds us all how important it is to understand and reduce our risk

factors for heart disease and heart attack. No one knows this better than Pat Nielsen of Lewes, Delaware, who experienced a life-threatening cardiac event in August 2022, and then received life-saving treatment at Beebe Healthcare. Pat awoke suddenly in the middle of the night—out of breath, sweating, and clutching her chest in pain. She took some deep breaths and tried to relax, assuming that what she was feeling would pass. It did not.

Pat dialed 911 and was transported to Beebe. She underwent a wide range of testing, with a promise that her care team was working to identify what was wrong and would do everything they could to address the problem immediately. Blockages were discovered in two of Pat's arteries, requiring that she undergo coronary artery bypass graft surgery immediately to clear them and ultimately save her life.

"It was a scary time, but I couldn't have received better care," recalls Pat, age 84. "After my surgery, the nurses were so kind, and the doctors visited with me often. But what stands out the most is that someone from Beebe sat with me overnight and held my hand to comfort me. I don't know who it was, and I didn't think to ask at the time. But it mattered."

Pat's coronary artery graft bypass surgery was led by cardiothoracic surgeon Steven Marra, M.D. He is part of a team of cardiac specialists at Beebe who provide comprehensive cardiovascular services to diagnose and treat heart disease—the leading cause of death among both men and women in the United States.

Beebe has continuously invested in the growth of its cardiovascular

services, unifying its interventional cardiologists, structural heart specialists, cardiac surgeons, and thoracic surgeons to create a multidisciplinary team that is trained to treat the most common to the most complex heart conditions. Electrophysiology, cardiac stress testing, cardiac rehabilitation, and cardiovascular imaging services are also integrated into Beebe's cardiac program, giving patients like Pat a truly holistic care experience.

"Ms. Nielsen's story exemplifies the level of quality care we are committed to delivering here at Beebe, and how we apply the latest, most innovative approaches to heart care," says Dr. Marra. "We have built a cardiovascular program to serve our community and its broad and diverse needs, with a commitment to making heart care easily accessible for those diagnosed with chronic conditions as well as people like Ms. Nielsen who require urgent care in emergency situations."

Today, Pat feels good. She sees her cardiologist, Ajith Kumar, M.D., of Cardiovascular Consultants of Southern Delaware, on a regular basis for continued follow-up care. They spend time at each appointment talking about the steps she can take to keep her heart healthy and strong.

"I have met many doctors in my life, but this experience stands out as one of the best," says Pat. "The doctors, nurses, and therapists from Beebe truly care about me. I am very grateful for each and every one of them."

## Steven Marra, M.D.

Board Certified Cardiothoracic and General Surgeon  
Department of Cardiac Surgery Chairman



## February is American Heart Month

To learn more about Cardiovascular Services at Beebe, please scan this code.

