

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A newsletter for the Maine Medical Center family

Brighton First Care Is Now Maine Medical Center Urgent Care Plus



Valerie Wilson had developed a urinary tract infection that would not go away. By the morning of Sunday, Jan. 26, she was miserable and couldn't wait another day to seek medical attention. The on-call physician at her primary care office told her to visit Maine Medical Center's urgent care clinic, Brighton First Care, because the emergency-trained clinicians there had access to all tests needed to figure out what was wrong and how to treat it, even on the weekend.

A new sign is installed at Maine Medical Center Urgent Care Plus on Brighton Avenue in Portland. Continued on back

Innovation, Patient Needs Drive EP Lab Expansion

When we think of advances in technology, we often think of better cell phones, televisions, computers and social media sites that allow us to connect to friends and family in new ways. That same kind of innovation is connecting patients to more advanced cardiac treatments that weren't available here in Maine just a few years ago, allowing people to recover closer to their families.

Those advances are apparent at Maine Medical Cen-

ter's electrophysiology program (EP), the first and last stop for patients who need advanced cardiac treatment. The EP lab has undergone a significant expansion in the past five years, driven by both improvements in technology and an increase in the number of Mainers seeking care close to home.

MMC's EP Medical Director Andrew Corsello, MD, said he can literally see the improvement in technology. "We can now see the electrical system of a patient's

whole heart in 3D," Corsello said. "It's just like your TV. We thought we had a clear picture before, but it was blurry."

It isn't just the pictures that have become more precise. Researchers have made breakthroughs in complex procedures, leading to training and technology that, in some cases, have cut the time patients have to spend in surgery in half. Corsello, for instance, said he used to schedule seven hours for an AFib ablation, a procedure

in which the surgeon sends electrical pulses and radio-frequency energy through a catheter to stop an irregular heartbeat. Now, patients are typically out of the electrophysiology lab in less than four hours.

"We used to have to send people to Boston for procedures we now do regularly at MMC," Corsello said. "Patients needing leadless pacemakers, ventricular ablations and laser lead

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'Urgent Care Plus' *from front*

"It was a perfect experience," Wilson said. "Things were explained to me very well. The testing was done. It couldn't have been a more pleasant experience."

For years, Brighton First Care has been there for patients like Wilson, providing treatment for conditions that are not life-threatening but do need prompt attention from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. seven days a week. Now, the clinic is getting a name that does a better job ex-

plaining what happens in the Brighton Avenue facility – Maine Medical Center Urgent Care Plus.

"Many people have assumed that they need to go to Maine Medical Center's emergency department to receive prompt care from emergency-trained clinicians," said Rebecca Bloch, MD, the medical director of Maine Medical Center Urgent Care Plus. "What they may not realize is that many of the same clinicians work at both facilities, and the wait time at Urgent Care Plus is typically shorter be-

cause patients' care is not as complex."

Maine Medical Center Urgent Care Plus also is expanding the hours of its imaging capability, so that X-rays, CT scans and ultrasounds also will be available at the facility from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m., seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Patients whose conditions are serious should still go to Maine Medical Center's emergency department. But for patients like Wilson, who was able to leave with not only the proper pre-

scription for her condition, but advice on an over-the-counter treatment that could help relieve additional symptoms, Maine Medical Center Urgent Care Plus is the right call.

"I would recommend this facility and the folks who work there to anybody," Wilson said.

You can learn more about Maine Medical Center Urgent Care Plus at mmc.org/urgentcareplus.

'Ep Lab Expansion' *from front*

extraction can now stay in Maine rather than travel to Boston."

Maine also has had an increase in the number of people seeking cardiac care. Part of that is because people are living longer. Maine's population also tends to be older and heavier than it once was. Age and weight are risk factors for heart disease. The EP lab recently hired three new world-class physicians and now does more procedures than anywhere else in Maine.

"We are constantly sharing

scientific papers with each other and seeking professional development opportunities so that we stay up to date on the latest advances in technology," Corsello said.

One thing that hasn't changed, though, is the commitment of the lab to working as a team, ensuring patients receive personalized care.

"People come to MMC's electrophysiology team for a program, not a procedure," said Jill Knutson, the EP lab's program manager. That means that some patients undergoing complex procedures may have a navigator assigned to them,



In the EP lab, left to right: Samip C. Vasaivala, MD, James Powers, MD, and Andrew C. Corsello, MD.

leading them through the whole process. Others receive regular follow-up phone calls. "We don't want patients to feel like they've had surgery and that's it," Knutson said.

"It's important to us that patients feel supported throughout their entire journey."