

**TO MEDIA:**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TRANSCATHETER AORTIC VALVE REPLACEMENT NOW  
PERFORMED AT EXCELA WESTMORELAND HOSPITAL**

***MINIMALLY INVASIVE PROCEDURE OFFERS NEW DIMENSION OF CARE  
FOR RESIDENTS LOCALLY***

**GREENSBURG, PA, February 11, 2021 ...** Aortic stenosis is the most common valvular abnormality among adults, with more than 200,000 cases per year across the United States, most often among men over age 50. Excela Health now offers minimally invasive aortic heart valve replacement as part of a widening array of procedures available to the residents of Westmoreland County within the Heart and Vascular Center at Excela Health Westmoreland Hospital.

Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR) is being performed on patients with symptomatic, severe aortic stenosis (narrowing or restriction of blood flow) at low, intermediate or high risk for standard valve replacement surgery. A TAVR typically takes less than an hour to complete, and patients can expect to spend less time in the hospital after TAVR compared to traditional surgical valve replacement.

Nearly two dozen patients have been evaluated for TAVR at Excela Westmoreland Hospital this month.

Current guidelines from the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology characterize symptoms of severe aortic stenosis as shortness of breath, angina, fatigue, syncope and palpitations. Without aortic valve replacement, severe aortic stenosis is a life-threatening disease and carries a poor short-term prognosis, with a survival rate as low as 50% within two years of symptom development.

For decades, the previous standard of care has been open-heart surgery for aortic valve replacement. TAVR offers an alternative method for many patients. During this minimally invasive, percutaneous approach, the valve is typically implanted through the femoral artery, although other access points may be used. TAVR can be an effective option to improve the quality of life in patients who otherwise have limited choices for the repair of their aortic valve.

Prior to treatment, patients are evaluated within Excelsa's Structural Heart Program by a multidisciplinary team that includes cardiothoracic surgeons, interventional cardiologists, cardiovascular imagers, cardiac anesthesiologists and nurse navigators. The team reviews cardiac imaging, coronary angiography and CT scans along with clinical history to make the best clinical decision for each patient.

"Optimal treatment is based on this team approach to assist patients in pursuing therapy that is most appropriate for their aortic stenosis," said Excelsa Health interventional cardiologist Nevin Baker, DO, FACC, FSCAI, who is spearheading TAVR utilization.

"We are excited about bringing this sophisticated therapeutic option to the residents of Westmoreland County. Our addition of this procedure further underscores the health system's commitment to offer patients the convenience of advanced cardiovascular care from an exceptional team of clinicians on a local basis," said John Sphon, Excelsa Health Chief Executive Officer. "We are continuing to expand the scope of services and expertise we offer across a spectrum of specialties, thereby minimizing the need for patients to travel out of the area to receive quality care when it is available close to home."

TAVR is just the latest in a growing list of procedures that will be performed in a hybrid operating room newly opened at Excelsa Westmoreland Hospital. This state-of-the-art surgical suite allows interventional cardiologists, radiologists and cardiac and vascular surgeons to work together in one room to perform traditional diagnostic functions of a cardiac catheterization lab or interventional radiology suites, combined with traditional surgical functions of the operating room. Its real-time intraoperative image guidance systems provide unparalleled imaging capabilities in the operating room itself -- before, during and after the procedure. For patients, that can translate into a shorter procedure, less post-operative recovery time and less risk for complications.

To learn more, visit [ExcelsaHealth.org](http://ExcelsaHealth.org) and search TAVR.