

Elizabeth M. Pfriem Hybrid Operating Room enhances heart and vascular care at Bridgeport Hospital

BRIDGEPORT, CT (April 24, 2017) – Patients in need of aortic aneurysm repairs, aortic valve replacements and other sophisticated heart and vascular procedures at Bridgeport Hospital can now benefit from one of the area's most advanced hybrid operating facilities. A ribbon cutting for the Elizabeth M. Pfriem Hybrid Operating Room (OR) was held April 18 with medical and administrative leaders on hand along with donors who supported the project. The room is named the lead donor Elizabeth (Betty) Pfriem, former newspaper publisher and well known philanthropist, who died earlier this month.

Construction on the new OR began last summer and included design input from several physicians and surgeons. The \$5.7 million project was supported by over \$2 million in philanthropic gifts from Pfriem, John Falconi, Albert Kleban, Emil Meshberg and others.

“Betty Pfriem’s gift to support the hybrid OR was one of her last major gifts,” said Bridgeport Hospital Foundation President Steve Jakab. “The hybrid OR is a fitting tribute to her many years of generosity toward the hospital and community. Not only has she helped enhance patient care, she has set an example for many others about the importance of philanthropy.”

“Hybrid OR technology provides the most sophisticated, detailed visualization of endovascular anatomy,” says Chairman of Surgery Nabil Atweh, MD. “This helps vascular surgeons and interventional cardiologists guide optimal placement of valves and vascular grafts. With the aid of this technology, surgeons have significantly improved the outcomes of minimally invasive procedures.”

“The hybrid OR exemplifies the ongoing evolution of cardiovascular disease treatment toward an increasing reliance on less invasive and minimally invasive approaches,” said Chief of Cardiology Stuart Zarich, MD. “For our patients, this often means a shorter hospital stay and faster recovery. In addition, we can safely treat more higher-risk patients who are not eligible for traditional surgical treatments.”

Designed to enhance patient safety and outcomes, the OR is equipped with the state-of-the-art GE Discovery IGS 740 imaging system, which offers flexible positioning and excellent image quality using low-dose X-rays.

Cardiologists and surgeons who will use the new OR say it increases their ability to treat patients.

“The hybrid OR allows physicians to perform more complex procedures and facilitates collaboration among cardiologists and surgeons,” said cardiologist Edward Tuohy, MD.

“Combining the capabilities of a catheterization lab and an operating room will allow physicians to collaborate in ways previously not possible,” said cardiologist Victor Mejia, MD.

“The hybrid OR’s technology improves our ability to image blood vessels during surgery and therefore allows us to combine minimally invasive and open surgical techniques with greater precision,” said vascular surgeon Lee Goldstein, MD.

The Joel E. Smilow Heart Institute at Bridgeport Hospital has been at the forefront of advanced cardiac care for decades. The hospital was the first in Fairfield County to perform open-heart surgery in 1963 and the first to perform balloon angioplasty in 1981. It also opened the county’s first electrophysiology laboratory in 1992 to diagnose and treat heart rhythm disorders.

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