

# Heart & Vascular Center at Cookeville Regional Medical Center still growing and expanding after 20 years

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Almost 20 years after opening in 1994, the Heart and Vascular Center at Cookeville Regional is still growing and expanding with no signs of slowing down, all while earning national accolades for clinical excellence and continuing to improve the care patients receive. And it's the only accredited chest pain center in the region with PCI (percutaneous coronary intervention, or opening of a blocked artery) capabilities.

From heart catheterization procedures such as angioplasty, to electrophysiology procedures treating heart arrhythmias, to complex heart bypass surgery, the heart program at Cookeville Regional offers a comprehensive list of services to treat heart disease. Services to treat vascular disease such as peripheral and carotid artery disease are also available. Utilizing these services to treat patients are nine cardiologists, including one electrophysiologist (specializing in arrhythmias), three cardiovascular/thoracic surgeons and four vascular surgeons.

This summer Cookeville Regional Medical Center and Tennessee Heart welcome interventional cardiologist Joshua Spencer, M.D., increasing the number of cardiologists to 10. He is coming to Cookeville after completing his fellowship in interventional cardiology at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. He received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee in Memphis in 2005 and is eager to begin treating patients here in the Upper Cumberland.

"We are happy to welcome Dr. Spencer to our staff," said Tim Fournet, M.D., cardiologist at Cookeville Regional and Tennessee Heart. "Our volumes have grown to the point that we really needed to add another cardiologist to meet the growing needs of our patients. On a daily basis, we always have two cardiologists in the hospital making rounds on inpatients and one interventional cardiologist in the hospital and 'on call' to handle emergency heart patients while the other cardiologists are in the office seeing patients there. We are continually recruiting and looking to add the

'right' cardiologist to our staff."

Efforts continue at Cookeville Regional, through the cardiologists, hospital staff and community partners, to develop a network of care for heart attack patients throughout the Upper Cumberland region. By working with area emergency medical services (EMS) and hospitals, the heart program at Cookeville Regional has implemented the "Code 37 protocol" that EMS and hospital staff at other hospitals may activate as soon as it is evident that a patient is experiencing a heart attack. When EMS or another hospital calls a "Code 37" the heart team at Cookeville Regional immediately takes action to receive that patient and begin lifesaving treatment within minutes. Many counties in the Upper Cumberland participate in this network of care including Cumberland County. As a result, heart attack patients receive fast treatment that not only saves lives, but also saves precious heart muscle that is crucial for quality of life following a heart attack.

"Code 37 has definitely improved the results we see for our heart at-

tack patients," stated interventional cardiologist Stacey Brewington, M.D.

"The gold standard for stopping heart attacks according to the American Heart Association is 90 minutes. We are beating that by 46 minutes. Our average time for stopping heart attacks at Cookeville Regional, from the time the patient arrives at the hospital to the time the heart attack is stopped, is 44 minutes.

"Time is muscle so the faster we stop the heart attack, the better for the patient," continued Dr. Brewington. "That's why is so important that we continue to develop Code 37 with our health partners throughout the region. By working together we eliminate the need for those patients to travel longer distances to a larger city for care, and thus, delay life-saving treatment."

Beating the gold standard for stopping heart attacks by more than half, it's no wonder that the Cookeville Regional heart program has been recognized two years in a row as being number one in Tennessee for coronary interventional procedures (heart catheterizations, angioplasties, etc.) and among America's 100 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Services by HealthGrades,