

## Media Release

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### **Mackay Base Hospital expands cardiac intervention options**

A new range of treatments for heart disease will be available locally for the first time on Monday when Mackay Base Hospital's Cardiac Catheter Laboratory expands services.

Mackay Base Hospital cardiologists Dr Michael Zhang and Dr Shanti Vaidya will perform the first Percutaneous Coronary Interventions officially on five patients with narrowed or block arteries

Dr Zhang said the Cath Lab had operated for 12 months as a diagnostic facility with 573 coronary angiograms performed and was now able to launch into the next stage of treatment.

"This is another first in the history of Mackay Base Hospital. Previously these patients would have gone to Townsville for this life-saving treatment," Dr Zhang said.

"Patients will have shorter waits for diagnosis and treatment," he said.

The first procedures will be witnessed cardiologist Dr Raibhan Yadav and cardiothoracic surgeon A/Prof Robert Tam of The Townville Hospital and Prof Darren Walters of The Prince Charles Hospital.

A coronary angiogram is a special x-ray of the heart using an injected contrast dye to look heart muscle or valve abnormalities and can also see if the arteries are narrowed or blocked.

A build-up of plaque in the arteries blocks blood flow and heightens the risk of heart attack.

Dr Zhang said performing the first treatments moved the Cath Lab to a new level.

Staff had to meet strict accreditation requirements that require diagnostic work to be performed to a high standard before interventional work can be done.

"The staff are providing an excellent service and are excited to not only be diagnosing patients but treating them as well," he said.

During a PCI a thin flexible tube is fed into a heart artery and a balloon is inflated to open the blocked artery. In some patients a small tube shape metal structure called a stent is inserted to ensure the artery remains open.

The \$3 million Cardiac Catheter Laboratory is expected to treat about 700 patients a year.

"Faster treatment times result in better outcomes. It also puts Mackay on an equal footing with their capital city counterparts.

"Having this new service available at Mackay Base Hospital gives people a fighting chance and means they are not disadvantaged by living in a regional area.

"Providing this treatment closer to home also reduces stress from family separation."

**ENDS**

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