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Legacy Heart Center receives nuclear lab accreditation

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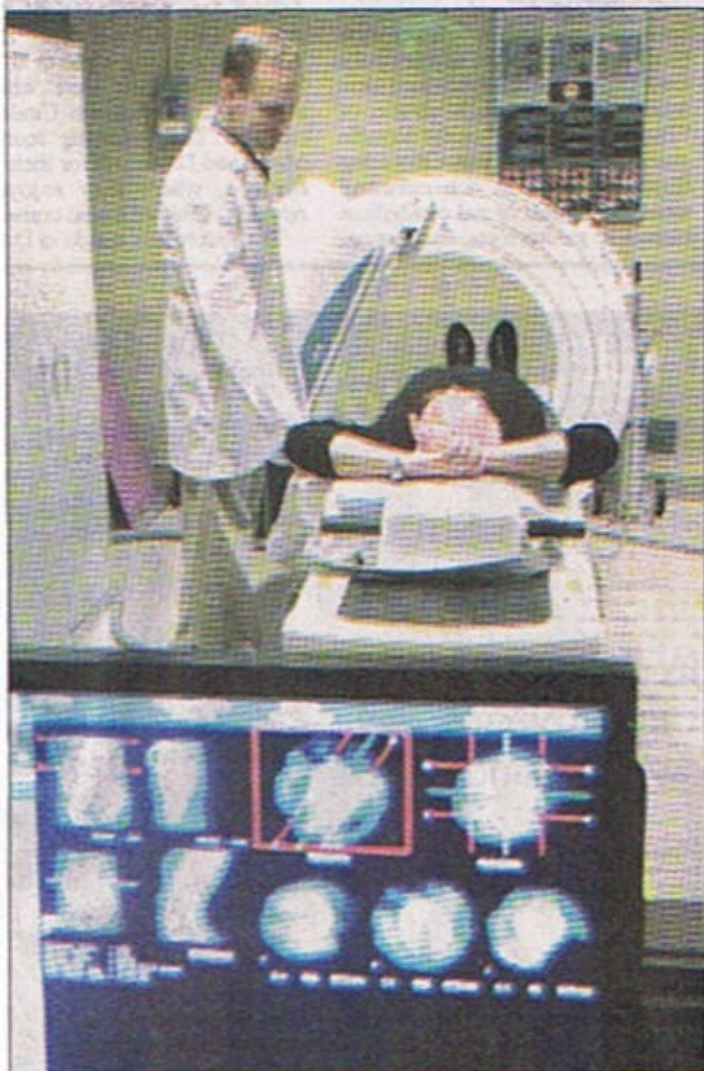
In 1995, when Drs. Waenard Miller and David A. Schwartz opened what is now Legacy Heart Center, it was the melding of two practices — that had competed for more than a decade — in an effort to provide effective service for Collin County residents.

Now, more than 10 years later, the private practice touts 15 heart experts and recently received accreditation for its nuclear laboratory in myocardial perfusion imaging, which allows doctors to detect the risk of heart attack using a small, radioactive tracer in the bloodstream.

"It's our view, because of our emphasis on quality, that we're going to have all our areas certified," Miller said. "It's our strategy to try to be the best resource for cardiac care in Collin County."

The Center's nuclear laboratory is now accredited by the Intersocietal Commission of Nuclear Laboratories. The Center's echocardiography lab has also been reaccredited by ICNL's partner group, the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories (ICAEL). The Center's echocardiography lab first received accreditation in 2000 and reaccreditation in 2003.

ICANL and ICAEL stated Legacy Heart Center was recognized for a "commitment to high quality patient care and diagnostic testing."



JAMIE MITCHELL / STAFF PHOTO

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"We're one of the first non-hospital groups to have an echo certification," Miller said. "We're a large diverse group, yet we're all focused on one thing: serving the patients."

Miller said a goal is to have all Center cardiology areas accredited, and has his sights on vascular and CT certifications in the future.

"These accreditations demonstrate our commitment to providing the highest quality cardiovascular care available under one roof in Collin County," said Dr. David Rawitscher, the Center's nuclear lab medical director.

Inspired to become a doctor by his father, who also practiced cardiology, Rawitscher primarily works out of The Medical Center of Plano (MCP) and has practiced in Plano since 1997. He was named MCP's Cardiologist of the Year twice in 2002 and 2003 and serves as director in MCP's Heart Failure Program, Lipid Clinic and Non-invasive Cardiology.

Legacy Heart Center made news in spring 2005, when the Center moved to its current location at 6601 Preston Road and became the first cardiology practice in North Texas to use a 64-

part image slicing LightSpeed computed tomography (CT) system, a major accomplishment, according to Miller.

When Miller and Schwartz combined their practices in the mid-1990's, the facility was named Texas Regional Heart Center.

"We sat down one day and said, 'Why are we beating each other up in competition?' If we pulled together, we realized we could do more for Collin County," Miller said.

Miller said the facility has become a "one-stop" shop for all cardiac needs, other than surgery procedures.

With 23,000 active patients, Miller said the doctors and more than 100 staff members strive to keep patients as the No. 1 focus, which is why the recent accreditations are so important.

"The patients love to be able to come here and get everything," Miller said. "While we have a large base in Plano, we want to grow into McKinney and further north."

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