



Lillehei Heart Institute

Mechanical Circulatory Support Step-Down Center

Goal

Improve patients' post-surgery survival and quality of life after VAD (Ventricular Assist Device) surgery.

Strategy

Establish a sophisticated recovery facility – a “Step-Down Center” – for people who recently have had a VAD implanted to receive rehabilitation and training.

Why A Step-Down Center Matters

VADs are a lifesaver. About five million people in the United States have heart failure, and in severe cases, treatment considerations can become a race against time. While heart transplantation is often the best treatment, finding a donor can take as long as 12 months. Most patients with severe heart failure would die if they had to wait that long.

Ventricular assist devices have revolutionized cardiac care. VADs are small pumps that, when implanted into the heart, take over the work a failing heart can no longer do on its own. They can keep a patient stable until a transplantable organ is available, supported until the heart heals on its own, or alive long-term if a transplant is not possible.

A history of success. University of Minnesota surgeons performed the state's first successful VAD implant in 1995, and our mechanical circulatory support program has become one of the largest in the country. Our surgeons now perform nearly 60 procedures each year. People who have received VADs at the University electively have a 96 percent chance of survival – well above the national average of 85 percent. We want to do even better.

A place to recover. Imagine a Ronald MacDonald House for VAD patients – a place where they, and their families, can receive rehabilitation and training to live with their VADs temporarily or permanently. This Step-Down Center – or “VAD Pad” – will improve the survival and the quality of life that our patients enjoy post-surgery. Dedicated staff and space will serve 3-4 patients and families, allowing them close alignment with the hospital. This also will provide potential opportunities to focus on research and further improve outcomes.



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EDUCATE

PREVENT

CURE



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Your Help

A \$5 million investment will keep the University's VAD program at the leading edge by providing a state-of-the-art place for recovery and rehabilitation. Funds would go towards staff salaries (three nurse practitioners, five VAD coordinators, a social worker, a research technician and an administrator) as well as identifying and renovating space on campus.

Your support will ensure that the University of Minnesota's mechanical circulatory support program, one of the largest in the country, remains competitive and, more important, reduces the number of lives lost to heart disease.

LEARN MORE

Please contact **Jennifer Soderholm** of the Minnesota Medical Foundation at j.soderholm@mmf.umn.edu, **612-624-2684**, or **800-922-1663**.

Educate. Prevent. Cure. Our roadmap to eliminating cardiovascular disease.

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