

YOUR HEART FAILURE TEAM

Our heart failure experts bring new and innovative therapies to patients and families every day. Our team offers years of experience in cardiac medicine, and a strong commitment to personalized care to meet your unique needs. As part of a university medical center, we offer our patients a collaborative, coordinated approach to expert heart care backed by research-based therapies.

In addition, we are one of nine sites selected nationally to participate in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Heart Failure Research Network, which enables us to offer a unique set of treatment options.

The Heart Failure team includes two physicians, Dr. Martin LeWinter and Dr. Peter VanBuren; a nurse practitioner, Ann Laramee, APRN; and a nurse coordinator, Cindy Wolkin, RN.

HEART FAILURE SUPPORT GROUP

We offer a heart failure support group on the second Wednesday of every month from 2 pm–3 pm. Each group session features a guest speaker who leads a discussion on a particular topic of interest to heart failure patients. In addition, these sessions provide an opportunity for patients to have their questions and concerns addressed and to meet others with similar experiences.

Other Services Include:

- Referrals to our Health Assistance Program (for financial matters)
- Referral to our Sleep Center for diagnosis and treatment of sleep apnea
- Opportunity to participate in clinical research studies
- Home-health referral as needed
- Advance care planning:
 - o Advance directives
 - o Palliative care
 - o Hospice care
 - o Family counseling

For more information, please call the Heart Failure Program.

UNIVERSITY CARDIOLOGY

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HEART FAILURE PROGRAM CARDIOLOGY



Welcome to Fletcher Allen's Heart Failure Program

Although heart failure is a serious illness, with the right treatment and careful management you can manage your symptoms and improve your quality of life.

Fletcher Allen's Cardiology Heart Failure (HF) Program is designed to support the efforts of your cardiologist and your primary care provider in providing you with the best possible care.

The Heart Failure Program is a collaboration between Fletcher Allen and the State of Vermont's Chronic Care Initiative, The Blueprint for Health. As part of that collaboration, our goal is to give you the tools you need to manage your condition.

VERMONT
Blueprint for Health

Smart choices. Powerful tools.

**Fletcher
Allen**
HEALTH CARE
In alliance with
The University of Vermont

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE PROGRAM

The timing and frequency of your visits with us will depend on the severity of your condition and your individual needs. Our Nurse Coordinator will meet with you first to introduce you to the program, review your information, and coordinate your care.

Our dedicated team uses state-of-the-art testing, specialized treatments and individualized support and education to develop a treatment plan that is tailored to your needs.



Our team offers:

- Expert diagnosis
- Regular standardized testing
- A standardized report that will be available to your cardiologist and primary care provider so that we can track your progress and work together to provide you with the highest quality care
- Coordination with your cardiologist and other members of the cardiology team, such as heart rhythm specialists or cardiac surgeons
- Medication management to fine-tune your treatment based on testing
- Appropriate use of life-saving devices (such as implanted defibrillators and/or specialized pacemakers)



- Assistance with diet and other factors that might help slow progression of your disease
- The opportunity to improve your exercise capacity by participating in our cardiac rehabilitation program
- A personal “care plan”

“Fletcher Allen’s Heart Failure Program is an excellent example of creative and responsive patient care. Reaching the Vermont Blueprint’s goals of improving health and prevention will be furthered by this partnership.”

– LISA DULSKY WATKINS, MD
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,
VERMONT BLUEPRINT FOR HEALTH,
VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

HEART FAILURE PROGRAM TESTING

You will periodically have tests done to evaluate the function of your heart, your overall fitness and other relevant information about your health.

These tests include:

- **Echocardiogram:** a non-invasive ultrasound test that provides a view of the heart’s structure (such as thickening of the heart muscle), the heart valves and the heart function (including the ejection fraction, which is a measurement of your heart’s pumping action).
- **Chest X-ray:** this imaging test shows whether the heart is enlarged and if there is congestion (fluid) in the lungs.
- **ECG (electrocardiogram):** a non-invasive test that measures the electrical activity of the heart and helps us determine whether you’ve had a heart attack, if there is thickening of heart muscle, or if the heart rhythm is abnormal.
- **Selected blood tests:** these tests will allow us to evaluate the effect of your heart failure on your kidney function and appropriately adjust your medications.
- **A six-minute walking test:** this allows us to measure your exercise capacity and monitor how it changes over time as we treat you.
- **Completion of a quality of life questionnaire:** this will enable us to track how heart failure is affecting your life.

These evaluations will help us choose the best medications and other treatments for you.

PATIENT EDUCATION



We also provide individualized education and lifestyle counseling with you and your family members that includes:

- Recognizing and managing symptoms of heart failure
- Monitoring your condition at home
- Knowing when to call the clinic/when to seek emergency help
- Medication counseling
- Lifestyle advice and dietary counseling
- Printed materials and resources, and on-line tools to help you manage your condition

And we provide specialized tools to help you manage your care:

- An individualized teaching booklet
- A diary to track your symptoms, weight and other information
- Automated telephone follow-up
- Advanced in-home care
 - o Automated medication dispensing
 - o Automated in-home monitoring of blood pressure, oxygen saturation, and weight
 - o For those patients with implanted defibrillator/pacemakers, we can remotely monitor the amount of fluid in your chest to detect symptoms early.