

Cardiology program at the heart of saving lives

JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, patients with a life-threatening heart condition called aortic stenosis needed open heart surgery to replace their heart valve. Surgery wasn't an option for some patients – and without surgery, patients with severe symptoms were expected to live only about two years.

Breakthroughs in cardiology have changed that, and Kaiser Permanente has been leading the way. In 2013, we launched the Heart Valve

through it, the doctor can replace the failing heart valve.

"After getting the patient ready, the actual procedure takes only 30 to 40 minutes. Most patients are walking in 8 hours and go home in 24 hours," says Dr. Haugen. "TAVR is extending life expectancy for aortic stenosis patients, and improving patients' quality of life." Based on national statistics, our Heart Team's outcomes



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—SCOTT HAUGEN, MD

Program in collaboration with Overlake Medical Center in Bellevue. Now, instead of major surgery, many heart patients can have effective, less invasive procedures.

"Through our combined efforts, our Heart Team is improving patients' lives with minimally-invasive procedures that treat structural heart disease," says Scott Haugen, MD, cardiology chief at Kaiser Permanente Bellevue Medical Center. Dr. Haugen is also co-director of the Heart Valve Program.

What's the new treatment? TAVR (transcatheter aortic valve implantation/replacement) is a procedure that involves inserting a tiny tube, or catheter, into an artery in the upper leg. The tube is moved all the way up to the heart, and

consistently beat national results by a wide margin. The team does 80 to 90 procedures each year.

Until 2016, TAVR was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) only for high-risk heart patients. Last year it was approved for moderate-risk patients, and it's now being evaluated for low-risk patients.

More progress for our patients. The Heart Team also performs a minimally invasive MitraClip procedure to correct a condition in which the heart valve leaks blood in two directions. The team is also building its program for other innovative procedures. "This is an exciting time in cardiology because patients now have new options for feeling better and living longer," says Dr. Haugen. "It's great to play a part in that." ■