

EXECUTIVE INSIGHTS: UNIVERSITY HEALTH CARDIOVASCULAR CENTER

Jimmy Holmes: Hello I'm Jimmy Holmes, Market President & Publisher of the San Antonio Business Journal. Welcome back to Executive Insights. Today I'm joined by Dr. Anand Prasad, Director of University Health's new Cardiovascular Center, to discuss heart health in San Antonio and South Texas, and how University Health is investing in advanced cardiovascular care for our community. Very nice to meet you, Doctor.

Dr. Anand Prasad: Nice to meet you.

Jimmy Holmes: Yes. To start off, could you please briefly introduce yourself and share your role at the University Health's new Cardiovascular Center?

Dr. Anand Prasad: Yeah, so we formed the Cardiovascular Center in late 2025, and I'm the initial director of the Cardiovascular Center, which was really founded with a goal to improve cardiovascular care throughout Bexar County.

Jimmy Holmes: Well, heart disease is such a significant problem in San Antonio and South Texas, and many of us know someone who has been directly impacted. My father, in fact, passed away 28 years ago from cardiovascular heart disease.

Dr. Anand Prasad: Sorry.

Jimmy Holmes: And why is University Health investing so much in new Cardiovascular Center, and how will it improve the overall health of our community and our region?

Dr. Anand Prasad: Right, so University Health has always been there for our people in Bexar County. Whether you were wealthy or poor, University Health has been a medical home for people throughout the region. What's changed now is that traditionally, we have the main university hospital and several outlying clinics, but now we're developing multiple centers that will have cardiology care, both outpatient centers as well as new community hospitals, all with cardiac capabilities. So, if you're a person in Bexar County and you or your loved one has heart disease, there'll be a place to go close to where you live to see a cardiologist.

Jimmy Holmes: Given the strong links between obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, how does this model improve coordination of care for patients and multiple health issues?

Dr. Anand Prasad: Right, so being a large integrated health system, University Health's uniquely poised to develop multidisciplinary care pathways and multi-specialty centers of excellence within the cardiac realm. So, some examples of that, we have the Women's Heart Center, and that is a program that has non-invasive cardiologists as well as interventional cardiologists, and represents a place that women across the spectrum of age and illness can go to to get multi-specialty care. Our Cardio-Kidney-Metabolic program that we're launching in a couple of weeks at Texas Diabetes Institute, another example of multi-specialty care addressing obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, cardiovascular disease,



DR. ANAND PRASAD
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Dr. Prasad is an interventional cardiologist and director of the University Health Cardiovascular Center, with more than 20 years of experience in cardiovascular medicine. He specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of complex coronary and peripheral vascular disease, caring for patients with conditions affecting arteries from the carotid vessels to the lower extremities. His path to cardiology was shaped during a formative rotation at a rural hospital, where he developed a strong interest in procedural medicine and advanced cardiovascular diagnostics. Prasad has received multiple honors for clinical excellence, including recognition as a San Antonio Top Doctor, and is known for his leadership in patient-centered cardiovascular care.

all in one spot. So, we have the resources, the physicians, the nurses to coordinate complex care of patients all coming together in one spot.

Jimmy Holmes: As you know, empowering patients through education is critical when managing chronic disease. What education resources or programs would the center offer to help patients better understand and manage their heart disease?

Dr. Anand Prasad: We are already engaged in a variety of educational events and initiatives through our corporate communications teams. We do health blogs. We're active on social media. A lot of patients now are getting their health information through digital forums, so we're really investing a lot in that platform. Beyond that, as we begin to grow these programs, each program will have their own educational outreach into the community. We'll work with primary care doctors and referring doctors to help with patient level education. The Vida Clinic, for example, on the Southside, is a community-based healthcare

center, which will be very focused on diet, lifestyle, prevention, obesity, diabetes, all the factors that lead to cardiac disease. And in fact, we launched our cardiology clinic at Vida last month, and so we have a representation already in that region, even before the new community hospital opens up.

Jimmy Holmes: Cardiology is a broad specialty, and I understand the Cardiovascular Center includes several signature subspecialty programs. Can you tell us about these program?

Dr. Anand Prasad: Yeah, so the term cardiology now has evolved so much over the last 50 years, really, and cardiovascular disease is a very broad term, and so many different types of patients, so many diseases fall under that umbrella term of cardiovascular disease. So, what we're doing is we're developing these signature programs that address those diseases in those patients. And just to give you some example, we have a wonderful Pediatric Heart Center with specialists who address congenital heart disease in young children, as well as heart rhythm issues in that same population. We have a robust adult congenital heart disease program that's now accredited that addresses adult congenital disease. As these patients get older, they go on to adulthood, they still have those heart defects that have to be monitored and treated over time.

Another example is our multidisciplinary Heart & Valve program. We do some of the most unique valve procedures in the entire region in that program. We've launched a Limb Salvage program, which got some recent press, where we're trying to save limbs and prevent amputations in patients with diabetes. We referenced the Women's Heart program earlier. We're about to launch a heart rhythm center of excellence, and also build a very robust Heart Failure program. So, it's not just one cardiovascular center, it's multiple subcenters within that larger enterprise.

Jimmy Holmes: San Antonio was recently referred to as the diabetes-related amputation capital of the world. Not a distinction any community wants. Limb salvage is one of your signature programs. How is this team-based approach helping more people with diabetes avoid amputation?

Dr. Anand Prasad: I've spent close to 25 years in this space working on patients with vascular disease and trying to understand the link between diabetes, kidney disease, and vascular disease and amputations. And it's true. We are one of the highest densities of amputations in the country. So we decided as we built this cardiovascular center to really focus on amputation prevention.

About three months or four months ago, we launched our first Limb Salvage program. That's at the Texas Diabetes Institute. Most of these patients end up not dying of their limb, but they die of heart disease, and so it's very important that a cardiologist be involved in the care of these patients. Now, that's the first

phase of the Limb Salvage program.

The second phase will be an even larger endeavor on the Southside near Palo Alto Hospital, which is our community hospital that'll be up in 2027. And that program will be an enterprise that we co-develop with Dr. Lyssa Ochoa, who's one of our partners down on the Southside. She's a passionate advocate for health disparities as well as preventing amputation, so Dr. Ochoa will be working closely with us to develop that program on the Southside.

Jimmy Holmes: Treatments and interventions for heart disease continue to advance rapidly. What less invasive and more precise options are currently available at University Health, and what innovations are on the horizon?

Dr. Anand Prasad: I think the best example of minimally invasive approach is our Valve and Structural Heart Disease program, both on the pediatric side as well as the adult side. We have really pioneered and done the first in the region for many minimally invasive procedures to fix heart valves. Those procedures traditionally could not be done, because the patients were too sick, or required extensive open heart surgical approach. Now with transcatheter valve procedures, we're able to do these on these patients, and oftentimes they can go home in a day or two, so we truly are the pioneers in the region for very complex structural heart disease.

Jimmy Holmes: That's fantastic news. A healthy workforce is essential to the success of our business community and overall economy. What advice would you offer business leaders when it comes to protecting their own heart health and the health of their employees?

Dr. Anand Prasad: So, the key is to not forget about yourself, and to remember that you need to sleep appropriately. You need to have a balanced diet. You need to have time to exercise, and you need to go see a physician and maintain your health with routine testing for blood pressure, testing for pre-diabetes, as well as diabetes, understanding what your cholesterol level and lipid profile are. So I would say, don't forget about yourself. You're busy sort of taking care of other people in your organization, but you got to take care of yourself first.

Jimmy Holmes: And set the example.

Dr. Anand Prasad: Yes, exactly.

Jimmy Holmes: That was Dr. Anand Prasad with University Health. We look forward to seeing you on our next edition of Executive Insights. Thank you.