

South Florida Hospital News™

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Cardiology

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Dr. Romualdo Segurola in one of the two "Smart ORs".

The Heart Institute at Palmetto General Hospital

Prior to fall 2006, residents of Hialeah and its surrounding communities did not have a local facility that could provide the necessary full range of services to heart attack victims within the recommended time needed to increase the odds of survival.

All that changed with the opening of The Heart Institute at Palmetto General Hospital a little more than a year ago.

Since opening, hundreds of area residents have received care at the revolutionary facility, which boasts a cardiac catheterization lab, a 10-bed ICU, featuring a "universal bed" concept, whereby patients spend their entire stay in the same bed instead of facing the disruption of changing rooms and floors – and perhaps most impressive are the hospital's two revolutionary "Smart ORs," which are among the most advanced cardiac facilities south of Tampa.

Contrasting typical cardiac ORs that are littered with hundreds of feet of equipment, the wireless design of the "Smart ORs" results in maximum efficiency and patient safety. The rooms also are equipped with fully integrated, voice-controlled machinery, allowing surgeons and their support staff to maneuver the operating table, lights and cameras without losing focus on the patient.

"The combination of state-of-the art technology and a highly-trained medical staff gives patients treated at The Heart Institute at Palmetto General Hospital the best chance for a successful recovery," says Romualdo Segurola, M.D., cardiothoracic surgeon and medical director of The Heart Institute. "I am proud to lead a facility that provides these revolutionary services to South Florida residents."

To add to Palmetto's focus on cardiac care, the hospital has implemented a new code to increase its door-to-balloon time – the time it takes between a patient's arrival to the emergency room and when an angioplasty is performed to unblock a clogged artery – and thus treat the signs of a heart attack as quickly as possible.

With the arrival of the hospital's new Emergency Department Director Obed Cruz came Code STEMI (Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction). Immediately upon detecting a heart attack in a patient in the emergency room, the code is called to inform other key departments to prepare for the patient's arrival.

"Code STEMI allows our cath lab to get ready to treat a heart attack victim and informs the ICU that they should prepare for the possible arrival of a new patient," said Cruz. "When you're talking about a heart attack every minute counts, and this gives us that extra edge that can help save lives."