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What is a center of excellence?

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Center of Excellence is a program that's assembled within a healthcare institution to really provide a unique concentration of expertise in a certain disease area. In this case, peripheral arterial disease also assembled are a group of additional individuals besides the health care givers to really help provide continuous comprehensive care from diagnosis to treatment to follow up care, etc.

How will it impact or improve patient care in Lubbock and the surrounding areas?

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Well, unfortunately, individuals who have plaque build up blockages in the arteries outside of the heart. In this case, predominantly the legs have a high incidence of amputation, losing parts of limbs or entire limbs. And if the disease state can be identified earlier, and appropriate therapies such as improving the flow through those arteries, through medications, through procedures with balloon, stents, etc, those amputations can be prevented. It also turns out that the group who has blockages in their legs tends to have blockages elsewhere and has a very high mortality. So identifying this group of individuals really opens the door for aggressive broad comprehensive care that can save limbs and even life.

Why is the PAD screening program such an essential part of the center of excellence?

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To deal with this disease, first you have to identify it and so, as we alluded to earlier, the earlier this can be identified, the earlier the disease process can be arrested and limbs can be salvaged. amputations can be minimized or eliminated, and everything else that could lead to a poor outcome and the patient cholesterol issues, high blood pressure issues, working on smoking cessation, all of those things can be part of this comprehensive care.

What research will be addressed at the center?

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Recently, we've identified really how at risk this PAD population is and so we're beginning we used to think only mechanically, let's open the artery any way we can. But it turns out these patients need systemic care to they need the heart their whole bodies cared for, they need this atherosclerotic process arrested and reversed. So we're beginning to study other drugs, diabetes drugs, cholesterol lowering drugs, and more comprehensive management programs to really improve long term outcomes, not just limbs, but also lives.

What is the Lonestar PAD Registry?

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The Lonestar PAD registry is a depository where all of these outcomes can be tracked across the state. And we can begin to learn which care processes which therapeutics which groups of patients do best which are at the highest risk which therapy should be applied and which should be applied the earliest.