

TO MEDIA:

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**EXCELA HEALTH HEART & VASCULAR CENTER
ADDS QUARTET OF SPECIALISTS**

***Experts in cardiovascular surgery and cardiac interventions
bring latest techniques to patients in Westmoreland County***

GREENSBURG, Pa., October 28, 2019 ... Excela Health has recruited two distinguished cardiothoracic surgeons and two interventional cardiologists to its Heart & Vascular Center based at Excela Westmoreland Hospital in Greensburg. All four offer extensive experience in their areas of expertise to the residents of Westmoreland County and surrounding counties, and enhance the level of heart care already available at Excela Health. They bring the complement of cardiovascular specialists to 17 serving patients across Excela's service area.

"We are pleased to expand upon the expert care found at Excela Health in many disciplines through these highly-regarded physicians," noted John Sphon, Excela Health Acting Chief Executive Officer. "These latest recruits are representative of the vitality of our health system and our ability to attract the best and the brightest in their respective fields to Westmoreland County. We continue to improve the health and well-being of every life we touch through our commitment to bringing quality care to them."

Michael Culig, MD, MMM, comes to Excela from the Allegheny Health Network (AHN) where he was part of McGinnis Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgical Associates at Forbes Hospital in Monroeville. Throughout his 30-year career he has held various leadership positions including division chief for cardiovascular surgery. More recently he

also served as physician champion for Operational Excellence across AHN. His focus over the past decade has been centered on improving patient outcomes, with his efforts resulting in various grants to support quality improvement.

Dr. Culig received both his undergraduate and medical degrees from Harvard University. His general surgery residency occurred at Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh, with further specialization in thoracic surgery during residency at the University of Texas, Southwest Medical Center in Dallas. He returned to Pittsburgh as a staff surgeon and has practiced cardiac surgery in the region at Mercy Hospital, Shadyside Hospital, West Penn Hospital and Forbes Hospital. Dr. Culig also has started heart surgery programs in Lviv, Ukraine, as well as closer home in Dubois and Monroeville.

To enhance his knowledge of healthcare operations within the physician office setting as well as at the health system level, he earned a Masters of Medical Management from Carnegie Mellon University.

His memberships include the Society of Thoracic Surgeons where he has served on a task force devoted to quality initiatives, the American College of Surgeons where he holds the Fellow designation and the Pennsylvania Association of Thoracic Surgeons. He is certified by the American Board of Thoracic Surgery.

Hiroyuki Tsukui, MD, PhD, returns to southwestern Pennsylvania following many years of professional practice in his native Japan.

Dr. Tsukui comes to Excelsior from the Hokkaido Cardiovascular Hospital in Sapporo, where he was chief of cardiovascular surgery, and former program director. He received his medical degree from Nigata University School of Medicine, and his doctorate at Tokyo Women's Medical University, where he had previously completed a residency in the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery at The Heart Institute of Japan. During subsequent training at various hospitals in Japan, he was repeatedly named chief resident within the cardiovascular surgery program.

At the conclusion of his residency training in 2002, Dr. Tsukui came stateside to deepen his skills where he would spend the next six years in Pittsburgh, completing a research fellowship at the McGowan Institute For Regenerative Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh and surgical fellowships in artificial heart and thoracic transplantation, and advanced adult cardiac surgery at UPMC.

Dr. Tsukui is board certified in surgery, thoracic surgery and cardiovascular surgery as well as in implantable left ventricular assist device and superficial femoral artery stent graft implantation.

His memberships include the Society of Thoracic Surgeons and the European Association for Cardiothoracic Surgery as well as the following: Japanese Surgical Society, Japanese Society for Thoracic Surgery, Japanese Society of Cardiovascular Surgery, Japanese Circulation Society, Japanese Association for Coronary Artery Surgery, Japanese Society of Vascular Surgery, among others. Dr. Tsukui is widely published and has held several teaching and leadership positions.

Vinod Kudagi, MD, joins the Excelsa Health cardiovascular program following five years of private and hospital-based physician practice in both interventional and general cardiology. Most recently he was part of the St. Luke's University Health Network in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, where he was responsible for starting a cardiac and peripheral intervention program at one of the network's hospitals. Among his specialties is transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR).

Dr. Kudagi received his medical education at JJM Medical College in Davangere, India, where he was inspired to seek a career in cardiology following his father's cardiac arrest, and his hereditary predisposition to coronary artery disease. He completed his internal medicine residency at the University of Connecticut, Farmington. Dr. Kudagi pursued a cardiac imaging fellowship at Saint Francis Hospital in Roslyn, NY, where he gained advanced experience in the use of MRI and CT scans as both diagnostic and treatment modalities.

His cardiology fellowship followed at Ochsner Clinic Foundation in New Orleans, with his interventional cardiology fellowship completed at Winthrop University Hospital in Mineola, NY.

Dr. Kudagi is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in internal medicine, cardiology and interventional cardiology. He is also certified as a registered physician in vascular interpretation.

David Lee, MD, FACC, comes to Excelsa Health at the conclusion of fellowship training in both general and interventional cardiology at the University of North Carolina Medical Center in Chapel Hill, where he was named chief cardiology fellow. Dr. Lee

received his medical degree from Case Western Reserve University, which was followed by an internal medicine residency at New York University Medical Center. His specializations include percutaneous coronary interventions, peripheral vascular interventions, and minimally invasive therapies for pulmonary embolism.

During fellowship training, Dr. Lee led a clinical trial investigating daily exercise therapy using fitness monitors to improve the quality of life for patients with lower extremity peripheral artery disease (PAD). He will be evaluating and managing patients with PAD in a new Claudication Clinic based at Excelsa Square at Latrobe.

As a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, he is board certified in internal medicine and cardiovascular disease.

To learn more, visit ExcelsaHealth.org and search 'heart' or contact the Excelsa Health Call Center, 1-877-771-1234.