

PRESS RELEASE June 4, 2025

HARLINGEN MEDICAL CENTER IMPLANTS RGV's 1st "SMART MINI - CCM" DEVICE TO HELP HEART FAILURE PATIENTS

Valley man receives "Optimizer Smart Mini" device to improve quality of life for heart patients; Dr. Frank Mazzola performs ground-breaking procedure at Harlingen Medical Center

HARLINGEN, June 4, 2025 – A Rio Grande Valley man has become the first patient in South Texas (south of San Antonio) to receive a new device designed to improve the function of the heart in heart failure patients. Dr. Frank Mazzola, Cardiac Electrophysiologist with the South Heart Clinic, performed the ground-breaking procedure at Harlingen Medical Center on Wednesday, June 4, 2025.

The patient, Enrique Leal Jr. of Santa Rosa, was doing well following the "Optimizer® Smart Mini – CCM device" procedure at Harlingen Medical Center. The device delivers "Cardiac Contractility Modulation" therapy to the patient's heart.

"This is new technology that improves the contractions of the heart," Dr. Mazzola said. "It can dramatically improve the strength of the heart and improve the quality of life for many patients."

The small device makes the heart contract more forcefully, and also helps the heart to relax, which helps strengthen the heart, he added.

Dr. Shereef Hilmy, Chief of Cardiology and Director of the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory at Harlingen Medical Center, said the new technology at Harlingen Medical Center can make a huge difference for patients with heart failure -- which is very common in the Rio Grande Valley and throughout the nation.

"In addition to helping patients feel better, this technology can help improve the patient's ability to return to the activities of daily life," Dr. Hilmy said. "For example, a patient may be able to walk further, with less symptoms."



In addition to Dr. Hilmy and Dr. Mazzola, the patient's cardiologist, Dr. Juan Joel Garza of the South Heart Clinic, was impressed with the new technology. The device can offer new hope for patients with heart failure by improving their cardiac output, as the heart is able to pump more blood and do so more efficiently. With this improvement, patients are often able to return to activities that they were unable to do for years.

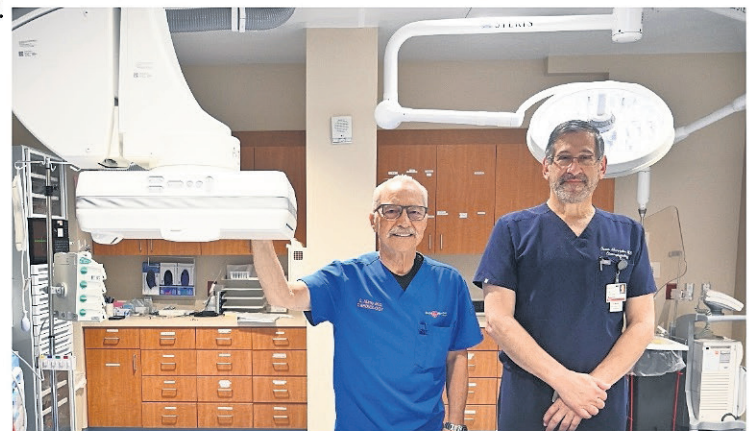
Todd Mann, the new CEO of Harlingen Medical Center (HMC), added that "using innovative technology, like the 'Optimizer Smart Mini' device, has allowed our teams to achieve major successes."

"Our staff works tirelessly to uphold the highest standards of care," Mr. Mann added. "We remain committed to innovation, compassionate service, and above all, to our patients."

Linda Bull, Director of the Catheterization Laboratory at HMC, said the new device "benefits our heart patients by supporting function of the heart muscle." This can help save lives, as the device can improve longevity.

Cardiologists at Harlingen Medical Center have pioneered many heart procedures in the Valley. Cardiologists at the South Heart Clinic include Dr. Hugo Blake; Dr. Michael Evans; Dr. Eduardo Flores; Dr. Juan Joel Garza; Dr. Shereef Hilmy; Dr. Frank Mazzola; Dr. David Yardley; Dr. Michael Balderas; Dr. Danielle M. Stone; Dr. James Stone; Dr. Deanna Yamamura; and Dr. Guillermo Salinas. The cardiologists are supported by a team of specialized technicians, nurses and staff in HMC's cardiac catheterization laboratory and intensive care units.

Harlingen Medical Center is an award-winning hospital for heart care and has been named a 5-star recipient for pacemaker procedures for five years in a row (2021-2025) by Healthgrades, a national healthcare information company. Also, HMC is the only hospital in the Valley to be ranked among the top 10 percent of hospitals in the nation for patient experience, recently receiving the "Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience" award.



In addition, Harlingen Medical Center is the only hospital in Cameron County which has received the highest rating for patient safety, an "A" grade in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade ratings, for eight times in a row (from 2021 to 2025).

***Congratulations to our exceptional cardiology team
at Harlingen Medical Center!
Pioneering numerous firsts in the Valley,
we combine state-of-the-art innovation with compassion and excellence.
That's our mission, saving hearts and lives.***

ABOUT HARLINGEN MEDICAL CENTER

Harlingen Medical Center is a nationally recognized and award-winning general acute care hospital. The Level IV Trauma Designated hospital specializes in bariatrics, cardiovascular, imaging, orthopedics, emergency medicine, gastroenterology, gynecology, and wound healing care. Our concept of "Patient Focused Care" puts you, the patient, first! The design, management, staffing, and operation of our hospital are focused on your needs and overall comfort. For more information, please call (956) 365-1000 or visit www.HarlingenMedicalCenter.com



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