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Contact:

Kerstin Steege

Cedar Valley Medical Specialists, P.C.

319-235-5390

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Addressing the Urgent Need for Cardiology Services in the Cedar Valley

Waterloo, IA - November 1, 2023 - The Cedar Valley community is facing a pressing issue - a shortage of professional cardiology service providers. Residents of Waterloo, Cedar Falls and the surrounding communities are finding it increasingly challenging to access essential cardiac care, which is vital for maintaining their heart health. This shortage not only poses a significant health risk but also jeopardizes the overall well-being of our community.

Cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of death globally and the Cedar Valley is no exception. As a community, we are in dire need of increased access to professional cardiology services to diagnose, prevent and treat heart-related conditions. The current situation, characterized by a shortage of cardiologists and limited access to cardiac facilities, simply cannot persist.

The consequences of this shortage are many:

        1.      Delayed Care: Patients in the Cedar Valley may have to wait prolonged periods to see a cardiologist, putting their health at risk. Timely intervention is crucial in cardiac care and any delay could lead to severe consequences.

        2.      Increased Travel: Many residents are forced to travel significant distances to receive necessary professional cardiology services, which is not only inconvenient but can also be financially burdensome.

        3.      Overburdened Facilities: The existing cardiology facilities in the Cedar Valley are overstretched and unable to meet the growing demand. This can result in suboptimal patient care.

        4.      Health Inequity: Not everyone in our community can afford the time and cost of traveling to distant cities for cardiac care, leading to disparities in healthcare access.

The shortage of cardiologists in Iowa is a matter of serious concern. Our community’s health, well-being and overall quality of life are at stake. Cedar Valley Medical Specialists (CVMS), P.C., is a local physician owned multispecialty group that has been a leading healthcare provider in the Cedar Valley for over 29 years. Cedar Valley Cardiology, a branch of CVMS, has been responsible for and dedicated to recruiting cardiologists while building the Cedar Valley Cardiology Center over the past 20+ years. Cedar Valley Cardiology and CVMS cardiologists remain highly invested in providing quality cardiac care in the Cedar Valley and surrounding communities to ensure every resident can receive timely access to the professional cardiology care they need and deserve. Cedar Valley Cardiology currently holds cardiology clinics in Waverly, Waterloo, Oelwein and Independence. To schedule an appointment at our Waverly, Oelwein and Independence cardiology clinic locations, please call 319-883-1452. For information regarding the Waterloo office, please call 319-883-1452.

With the recent opening of the Cedar Valley Cardiology clinic within Waverly Health Center and the addition of Dr. Joe Choufani in late August 2023, the Waverly Cardiology clinic location has **immediate availability**. In most cases, a referral from a primary health care provider is not necessary. Dr. Choufani is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and Cardiovascular Disease as well as by the National Board of Echocardiography.

A recent patient’s friend had this to say about their experience, *“Today I had the privilege of accompanying a dear friend to a cardiology appointment at the Waverly Clinic. I have accompanied my departed husband as well as attending my own cardiology appointments for over 10 years. I have never experienced the time and attention that we received today from Dr. Joe Choufani. He answered all our questions. He spent time with us as we awaited test results to be transmitted. He was a very comforting presence during a stressful time. I believe that this kind of care needs to be recognized and commended.* – C.S.”

The health of the Cedar Valley community is a collective responsibility. By raising awareness about the shortage of professional cardiology services and advocating for and recruiting professional cardiology providers, we can ensure a healthier future for all the residents of Waterloo, Cedar Falls and the surrounding communities.

For more information, please contact Kerstin Steege, Cedar Valley Medical Specialists Director of Operations, at 319-235-5390.

Cedar Valley Medical Specialists, P.C.

4150 Kimball Ave P.O. Box 2758 Waterloo, IA 50704

CedarValleyMedical.com

