

# InsideSunday

KNOW YOUR HEALTH PRO

## Dr. Ravi Rao

*Cardiologist, brother focus on providing high-level care*

BY GEORGE WHITE  
FOR FLORIDA TODAY

After growing up and getting medical training in Chicago, Dr. Ravi Rao decided he wanted to practice cardiology and raise his children in a smaller community.

He chose Titusville, as did his brother, Dr. Surya Rao, where they now provide top-notch cardiac care out of a new clinic at Parrish Medical Center.

"After going out east for training as cardiologists, my brother and I always planned on practicing together. At first we went back to Chicago.

"There were a lot of people that had to be shifted to the main centers for high-level care. I always wondered why is it that you can't provide high-level cardiac care at these other cities so that they don't have to drive long distances and there were delays in treating heart attacks."

At Parrish Medical Center, Rao performs angioplasty, inserting a balloon to help clear a clog in the artery, while also inserting a stent to help keep the artery open. His goal is to have the procedure completed within 60 minutes from the time the patient walks in the door.

"I pretty much have everything that a bigger facility has. It's kind of a one-stop shop," he said. Ravi Rao talked about his career and advances that help save lives and improve recovery times.

**QUESTION:** How has angioplasty changed?

**RAO:** It used to be done by inserting a wire in the artery from the groin. Now we're doing it through the artery in the wrist, and it works much better. The trend is to send them home on the same day.

**Q:** Are people more aware of heart health issues now?

**RAO:** It's definitely better, but there's still a long way to go. It's a combination of diet and exercise, not smoking and diabetic control. People need to have exercise every day to get your heart rate up to 70 percent of capacity. That's a huge part of it.

**Q:** What new procedures lengthen life expectancy the most?

**RAO:** Patients who suffer a heart attack now, it is shown that the angioplasty will improve their survival. The other area, if the heart is weak, putting a defibrillator in, will definitely save your life. That's the key to all (emergency medical services). The quicker we can shock you out of it, the better.

**Q:** How will the aging of the baby boomers affect your specialty?

**RAO:** There will be an extreme shortage of cardiologists. It will be very important for them to be educated in cardiovascular health. I think it's going to be overwhelming if people don't take care of themselves.

**Q:** How rare is needing a heart transplant?

**RAO:** It's pretty uncommon, because usually it's related to heart muscle disease more than blockage. Usually, we can make them functional enough through bypass or angioplasty. A lot of patients who have heart disease have lung disease, which makes it extremely difficult. ■

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### Dr. Ravi Rao

cardiologist

**Office:** Heart Care Centers of Florida, 3822 S. Washington Ave., Titusville, 636-6914.

**Hometown:** Originally from India, raised in Chicago

**City of residence:** Titusville

**Education:** Bachelor of science in biochemistry from Northwestern University in Chicago, Northwestern Medical School, Internships in general surgery at the Internal Medicine Medical College of Wisconsin and Loyola University Medical School in Maywood, Ill.; residency at Cook County Hospital in Chicago and Brown University in Providence, R.I.; fellowships at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Maine

**Family:** Wife, Sudha, and daughters, Shanti, 10, and Meera, 8. In practice with brother, Dr. Surya Rao, also a cardiologist

**Hobbies:** Tennis and golf