

Health Update

Older Americans With Advanced Heart Failure Get New Lease On Life

(NAPSA)—Adrienne Blankenship has known her husband Carter since she was 3 years old. “We were destined to be together,” she said. “It was always love.”

Carter’s metaphorical heart was set on forever with Adrienne, but his physical heart wasn’t going to make it easy. Little did he know, Carter was waging a long-time battle against heart failure.

It started small: some fluid buildup, a bit of swelling, difficulty breathing and then, when Carter was 70, he had a minor heart attack and his heart started to fail.

At age 71, Carter was not an ideal candidate for heart transplantation, which he desperately needed. Instead, his doctor told him about a revolutionary device called the HeartMate II, a left ventricular assist device, also known as an LVAD.

“The medications weren’t cutting it, being in and out of the hospital wasn’t the way to go and I just felt terrible,” said Carter. “When my doctor told me about the HeartMate II, and that it would offer me my life back, I didn’t have to think twice.”

In 2010, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the HeartMate II for Destination Therapy or long-term support. For Carter, this meant he could have the heart pump for the rest of his life. In fact, Carter was the first person in the country to receive the device after the FDA approved it, and today, he is not just alive—he is thriving.

What Is the HeartMate II?

The HeartMate II is a small implantable LVAD that helps circulate blood throughout the body when the heart is too weak to pump blood adequately on its own. Available at more than 300 medical centers, the HeartMate II



A new implantable device provides what the Journal of the American College of Cardiology calls an “attractive option” for older patients with advanced heart failure.

has rapidly become the most widely used and clinically studied LVAD in the world. More than 10,000 patients have received the device.

According to a study in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, the LVAD provides an “attractive option” for older patients with advanced heart failure.

“One important positive factor in the use of LVAD therapy for older patients is that they are very appreciative of the improved quality of life afforded by the LVAD. Whereas younger patients want to live longer, older patients want to live better,” the researchers noted.

Adrienne echoes that sentiment every opportunity she gets. “The HeartMate II gave us a second shot at forever. This year, we’ll be together 41 years. And counting. We have a beautiful granddaughter and darling grandson who have the opportunity to know their grandpa, and that’s time we’d never have had with them otherwise.”

Learn More

For more information about heart failure or the HeartMate II, visit www.hearthope.com, and to see patients’ stories, visit www.thoratec.com/shareyourstory.