Robotic Cardiac Surgery program opens at MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

MedStar Health is pleased to announce that the first robotic cardiac surgery program to serve the southern Maryland, greater Washington, D.C., and northern Virginia region is now underway at MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

Yuji Kawano, MD, is the physician leader of the cardiac robotic surgery program. Dr. Kawano joined MedStar Health after completing an advanced robotic cardiac fellowship at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta—one of the leading robotic cardiac programs and training centers in the United States.

For more information or to refer a patient, please call 202-877-7464.
Robotic cardiac surgery

Combining the agility of robotic instruments with a high-definition 3D camera, Dr. Kawano and the surgical team are able to perform cardiothoracic procedures through very tiny incisions in the chest wall that would not be possible without the da Vinci® robot technology. Robotic heart surgery replaces a traditional sternotomy, which involves splitting the breastplate. A highly specialized approach, it can provide patients with enhanced recovery, shorter hospital stays, and fewer complications compared to conventional methods. Robotics may be applied to treat mitral and tricuspid valve conditions, atrial fibrillation, and cardiac tumors, for low-risk surgical patients as well as high-risk patients with complex comorbidities.

About Yuji Kawano, MD

Dr. Kawano is a cardiac surgeon at MedStar Washington Hospital Center with a unique specialization in minimally invasive and robotic heart surgery. Dr. Kawano comes to MedStar Health from Emory University Hospital in Atlanta where he completed his advanced robotic cardiac surgery fellowship. He received the full spectrum of training in robotic cardiac surgery under some of the first, and most experienced, robotic cardiac surgeons, worldwide. Dr. Kawano completed an advanced adult cardiac surgery fellowship at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston. He went to medical school and completed his residencies in Japan.

Philosophy of Care

“Robotic surgery is an excellent option for a patient seeking better cosmesis, quicker recovery, and less post-surgical pain, without compromising the clinical result of surgery itself. I work closely with my colleagues to fully evaluate the benefits and potential risks for each case. My patients can always count on me to be honest with them—to explain their situation and to help them understand their treatment options. My first priority is always the patient’s safety.”

MedStar Health cardiac surgery program

MedStar Health cardiac surgery program is widely respected for exceptional talent, leadership, superior outcomes, a strong collaborative culture across the cardiovascular spectrum, and a track record of creating and adopting new technologies and techniques. Some key highlights include:

- We are one of the highest volume cardiac centers in the mid-Atlantic with over 2,200 cardiac surgery procedures performed annually.
- Our patients have access to the latest medical advances. Cardiac surgeons lead numerous ongoing clinical trials evaluating new medical devices, innovative technologies, and procedures.
- We are one of the top five centers in the country for Ventricular Assist Device (VAD) implantation, a life-saving device for patients living with late-stage heart failure.
- Our heart transplantation program is one of the busiest in the mid-Atlantic.