

HERO AT HEART

Dr. Luis Pires



This year, 1.2 million Americans will have a heart attack. Half of them will die.

The truth is that heart disease is still the number one cause of death of adults in America — and in Michigan. But the heart doctors of St. John Hospital and Medical Center are working to change that. And that's why we salute this week's Hero At Heart.

Meet Dr. Luis Pires, Cardiologist Electrophysiologist at St. John Hospital and Medical Center in Detroit.

Q: Dr. Pires, when did you know you wanted to be a doctor?

A: I was 15 years old. I had just come to the United States and started to learn English. I was talking with a cousin who already lived here, and I remember him asking me, "So, what are you going to do, Doc?" I decided at that moment I would become a doctor, and I never changed my mind. It suited me.

Q: What do you think are the challenges of practicing medicine?

A: The biggest thing is the time I am able to spend with my patients. Today practicing medicine is very technology-driven, and with all the other aspects that demand a doctor's attention, these circumstances can create a difficult doctor-patient relationship if you allow them to.

Q: What makes a good patient/physician relationship?

A: Understanding one another. Friction can arise if the doctor is not listening to what the patient is saying and vice versa. Therefore, it is most important for the doctor and patient, as well as their family, to listen more carefully. Paying attention to details provides better care and clarifies expectations about the treatment options.

Q: What's on the horizon in heart care?

A: In the past two to three decades, there has been an explosion in how we treat cardiac patients. It is a very different discipline today. The management of rhythm disorders has evolved dramatically, and we are performing procedures that didn't exist just years ago.

As the Director of the Heart Rhythm Center, I have seen emerging technologies that allow us to cure problems, not just treat the symptoms. We are now able to identify and treat a variety of patients through new procedures such as implantable stimulators, which are being used to prevent sudden death. It is a very exciting time to be in heart care.

Q: What is some medical advice the world can't do without?

A: Medicine should have a global agenda rather than an individual focus. We tend to ignore what is happening in other parts of the world and concentrate on small groups or specific diseases. However, as a global village, we would benefit from an 'open-market' collaboration that allowed us to advocate for everyone – across all borders.

Q: Why did you choose St. John Health?

A: In southeast Michigan, St. John plays an important role as a large health care system, and more people should know about it. In heart care, St. John is nationally recognized and offers everything that any other health system provides. This includes state-of-the-art technology, respected cardiovascular doctors and support staff and a wide range of educational programs. As Vice Chief, Division of Cardiology, and Associate Professor at Wayne State University, I can attest that St. John is also an excellent teaching institution. We want to treat our community and surrounding areas. They just have to know about us.

To find out your risk for heart disease, visit us online and take our 2-minute heart assessment at www.realmedicine.org/heartcheck

You can find Dr. Pires at Eastside Cardiovascular Medicine, PC in Roseville. If you would like to make an appointment, please call 1-888-440-REAL or visit us online at www.realmedicine.org.

Dr. Pires is an independent physician on the medical staff at St. John Hospital and Medical Center.



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