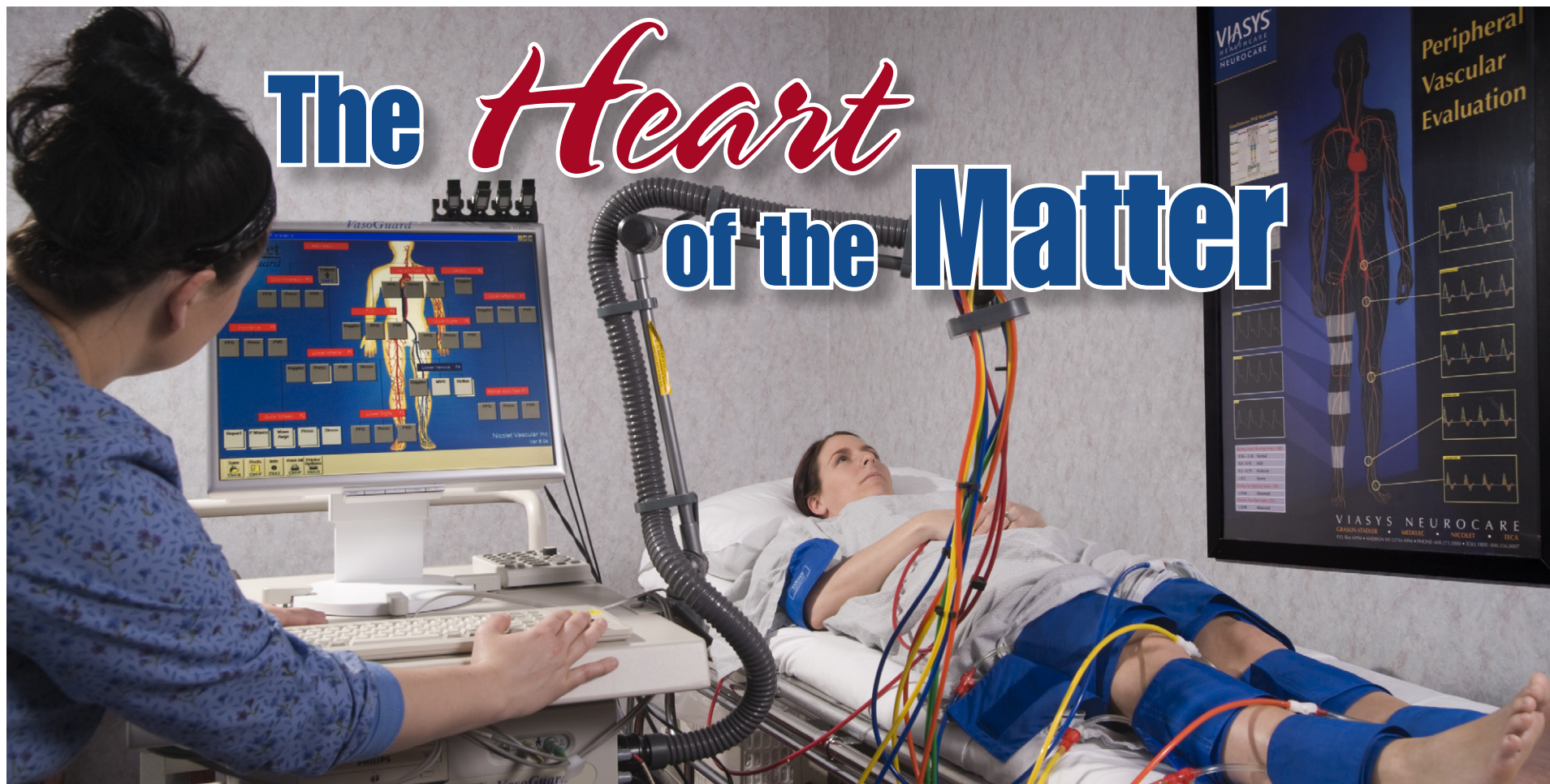




# The Heart of the Matter

by Benjamin Margalit/Margalit Studio

Thirty-year family physician Dr. John Gray is turning traditional cardiovascular care on its head by working around insurance companies that deny asymptomatic screenings. Find out how to uncover hidden cardiovascular problems—simply, affordably, and in a single visit. *See page 5.*



by Benjamin Margalit/Margalit Studio

Trained technicians conduct a series of tests to uncover congenital heart defects, plaque build-up, and other cardiovascular problems that can lead to sudden cardiac arrest—at any age.

## Local physician Dr. John Gray is saving lives with affordable in-office heart, lung and circulation screenings that work around insurance company delays—and denials.

by MimiVanderhaven

**Q**uick, what's the number one killer of women? Breast cancer? Diabetes? Nope. It's heart disease.

In fact, according to physician Dr. John Gray, heart disease kills nine times as many women as breast cancer.



**on the cover**

Dr. John Gray received his board certification in family practice in 1989. The Consumer's Research Council named him one of America's top family doctors for 2004, 2007, 2008 2009, and 2010. His screenings are already saving lives.

"When it comes to heart disease, women in the U.S. have always received second class care," Dr. Gray says. "It's getting a lot better, but in spite of the facts, heart disease is often still considered a man's problem."

Dr. Gray points to research indicating that in a hospital emergency room men complaining of chest pain have always been more likely to receive a cardiac catheterization than women with the same symptom. "It's terribly sexist, but a woman with chest pains was simply considered to be a Nervous Nellie," he laments. "Part of the problem is that women experience atypical symptoms of heart disease. They often don't get the classic radiating pain or tingling like men do, so their symptoms can go unnoticed. As a result, women are much more likely to die of a first heart attack than men are."

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So why is a 30-year veteran family physician like Dr. Gray so interested in heart disease? One reason is that every seven seconds a woman in her thirties drops dead of cardiac arrest from undiagnosed heart disease. Another reason is that Dr. Gray is a D.O., a Doctor of Osteopathy.

"The single credo of osteopathy is that 'the rule of the artery is supreme,'" he explains. "In other words, circulation is the key to everything."

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Dr. Gray is one of the only family doctors in the nation with an ICAEL accreditation (the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories). He attended the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine—where osteopathy was developed—and did a rotating internship at Sandusky Memorial Hospital. He has devoted a great deal of his continuing education and practice to cardiovascular and female health, and he studied at the Cleveland Clinic under the renowned Vijay Mistry, MD, FACC.

And although he's had his own practice for 30 years, this year is going to be different.

### Taking Control of Your Health

Instead of allowing insurance companies to dictate the cardiovascular health of his community, Dr. Gray is taking matters into his own hands.

"Insurance companies have put too many restrictions on cardiovascular testing for patients with substantial risk factors, but

few symptoms," he explains. "So now we're bypassing insurance companies and offering those tests ourselves, at a price people can actually afford."

Dr. Gray has offered in-office stress testing since 1985, but by purchasing additional state-of-the-art equipment and hiring a staff of trained technicians, he now offers a complete heart, lung and circulation screening that can help determine your own cardiovascular health. The following tests are completed in a single visit and at a price that's discounted substantially off the traditional several thousand dollar total price tag:

- an EKG
- resting echocardiogram
- stress echocardiogram, if appropriate
- pulmonary function test
- peripheral vascular circulation screening

### Who Should Take the New Tests?

According to Dr. Gray, one-third of serious congenital heart problems go undiagnosed into adulthood. As a result, the screenings are recommended for all athletes 18-25—at least one time. "I want to see an ultrasound of the heart before a young man or young woman gets involved in serious athletics," Dr. Gray insists. "This concern has given rise to books like 'The Home Field Advantage,' which addresses athletes dying of sudden cardiac arrest."

And if you are 35 or over and have never had these tests, Dr. Gray recommends that you have a baseline done. “It’s important to know your baseline so you have an appropriate comparison as you age,” he says.

You don’t have to be a patient of Dr. Gray to receive the new screening. “These tests are essential for people who want to take control of their own health,” he adds. “They are available to anybody. We’ll go over the results with you—within 24 hours, but often in the same day—then send them to your family physician. Of course, if we find anything serious, we’ll immediately refer you to a cardiologist.”

## A Holistic Approach

As a Doctor of Osteopathy, Dr. Gray received a standard medical school education with additional training in circulation and musculoskeletal issues. Plus, osteopaths typically take a more holistic approach to health care.

“I like to take a whole body approach,” Dr. Gray says. “I’m an integrated care specialist, which means I received traditional Western training plus holistic training. That means if your cholesterol is high, I may prescribe Lipitor, or I may suggest red yeast rice.”

Lowering your cholesterol is often the key to avoiding “the silent killer.”

“Heart disease is a ticking time bomb,” Dr. Gray warns. “Right now a lot of people are walking around waiting to drop dead from an undiagnosed aortic aneurism.”

Cardiovascular health is all about the lining of the arteries called the “endothelium.”

“The endothelium is the most highly specialized tissue in the body,” Dr. Gray explains. “It essentially determines how long you are going to live. High blood pressure and cholesterol are the primary drivers, and smoking and birth control pills are primary causes. My goal is to help people understand how to take control of their health, especially women who have not always received the care they deserve.”

*The office of Dr. John Gray is located at 3600 Kolbe Road, Suite 210, in Lorain. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 440-960-7474. Office hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.*



**Dr. Gray recommends having a baseline screening—in general for those over age 35 and for athletes age 18-25.**