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WITH HELP FROM HER HEALTH CARE TEAM AT MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER, ALICE DE SANTE HAS TAKEN CONTROL OF HER HEART FAILURE AND IS MAKING DECISIONS THAT PROTECT AND IMPROVE HER HEART HEALTH.

AT 84 YEARS YOUNG, ALICE DE SANTE knows it is never too late to improve her heart health. After a heart attack two years ago, Ms. de Sante is living life to the fullest thanks to the Heart Failure Management Program at Monmouth Medical Center.

Ms. de Sante, of West Long Branch, was one of the first patients enrolled in this unique program that is helping people with heart failure take control of their disease by understanding and carefully following a proven treatment plan.

“There is no cure for heart failure, but there are many things people can do to slow the progress of the disease and control their symptoms,” said Charles Mattina, MD, Cardiologist and Medical Director of the Heart Failure Management Program.

According to the American Heart Association, heart failure is the leading cause of hospitalization in people over 65 years of age. Individuals with heart failure are at risk of repeat hospitalization due to frequent exacerbation of their disease; 25 percent of patients are re-hospitalized within 30 days and
33 percent have one or more hospitalizations within six months.

Consistent follow-up at the outpatient Heart Failure Management Program, coupled with regular visits to her cardiologist, have enhanced Ms. de Sante’s understanding of the disease and given her the tools to improve her quality of life. While her participation in the program began before she was discharged from the hospital, people with heart failure can also be referred to the program as outpatients or following their stay in a short-term care facility.

The key to the program’s success is the continuity of care provided by advanced practice nurse Denise Yaman, who facilitates the medical monitoring, education and counseling for each patient. “When Ms. de Sante and patients like her understand how their diet and activity levels affect their condition, they are eager to take control of these variables themselves,” explained Ms. Yaman. “They are taught to weigh themselves each day and check their ankles and legs for swelling that can be the first signs of dangerous fluid retention. Early, mild symptoms are managed easily at home.”

“I can call any time day or night if I have problems or questions,” said Ms. de Sante, whose children live out of the state. “It is wonderful to know that help is close at hand.”

Ms. de Sante continues to enjoy good health and live independently. She plays bridge with friends, enjoys cooking low-salt recipes and has made her one-hour cardiac rehabilitation workouts a routine.

“A patient-centered program such as this brings together all the medical resources necessary to combat heart failure,” said Sharon Holden, RN, BSN, MPA, RDCS, Assistant Vice President of Cardiopulmonary, Critical Care and Emergency Services at Monmouth Medical Center. “Cardiologists, primary care physicians, pharmacists, nutritionists, nurses, social workers, physical therapists and behavioral health professionals are part of a team effort that is improving patient outcomes.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE HEART FAILURE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AT MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER, CALL 732-923-6702.