

PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute

2nd Opinion Guide

UPMC Pinnacle

Getting a diagnosis for a heart condition can be stressful and overwhelming. It is important to have a doctor you trust. A doctor you are comfortable with and can help you along the way.

What is a 2nd opinion?

You may want to know as much as possible if you are diagnosed with a heart condition. Some people want to talk with a different doctor to get more input. You may want to confirm your diagnosis and treatment options. This is called a 2nd opinion.

Why should I consider a 2nd opinion?

You may ask for a 2nd opinion if:

- You've been told you have a rare or life-threatening condition
- You need further information or clarity about your diagnosis
- You have multiple medical issues
- You want treatment that is more aggressive
- Your treatment options vary widely in cost
- You're not responding to a treatment or surgery as expected
- You are not confident in the care of your current doctor
- Your insurance requires a 2nd opinion

You may not feel comfortable asking for a 2nd opinion. You may think it is not respectful to your current doctors. It is perfectly normal to want to ask for a 2nd opinion. You are in charge of your health care decisions. You need to be comfortable with any treatment decision you make.

“It’s important for patients and physicians to have a common goal of care. If they don’t match up, if the treatment isn’t as aggressive as you’d like, then look for that second or third opinion,” says **Hemal Gada, MD**, interventional cardiologist and medical director of structural heart at PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute.





“They gave my son hope, they gave my family hope, and evidently looking at my record, they realized there was something they could do. I owe UPMC Pinnacle my life,” SAYS FURMAN.

How do I find a specialist for a 2nd opinion?

- Start by asking your primary care doctor for a recommendation.
- Check with family and friends. They may have been treated with the same condition or know someone who has needed care.
- Contact societies for the specialty you need help with. Cardiac groups, such as the American College of Cardiology and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, have a list of doctors and can tell you about the quality of their care.
- Ask your health insurer about specialists in the network.



“An advantage of our heart program is that we have a comprehensive center with numerous options we can offer our patients. There’s no cookie-cutter approach,” says **Mubashir Mumtaz, MD, FACS, FACC**, chief of cardiovascular and thoracic surgery at PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute.

What should I do before my appointment?

- Check with your health insurance company to confirm that the plan will pay for a 2nd opinion.
- Let your current doctor know your intentions to get a 2nd opinion. Most doctors understand patients' rights to another opinion and welcome the opportunity for you to make the most informed medical decision.
- Gather any necessary medical records from your doctor in advance so you can share the information with the specialist you will see. Your current doctor must provide your medical records to you, but may charge you for copies.
- Confirm that the doctor from whom you are seeking the 2nd opinion is at least the same level of expertise as your current doctor.
- Check with the specialist's office you will be visiting for the 2nd opinion if the medical records are needed in advance of your appointment.
- Research your condition and treatment options in advance, outlining any questions you have.
- Plan to bring a friend or family member to the appointment—to listen, take notes, and to bring up questions based on what you learn.

“PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute is a one-stop shop for cardiovascular services. Our team of specialists works closely together—collaborating to offer the latest options for your diagnosis,” says **William Bachinsky, MD, FACC, FSCAI**, interventional cardiologist and director, cardiovascular interventional program at PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute.



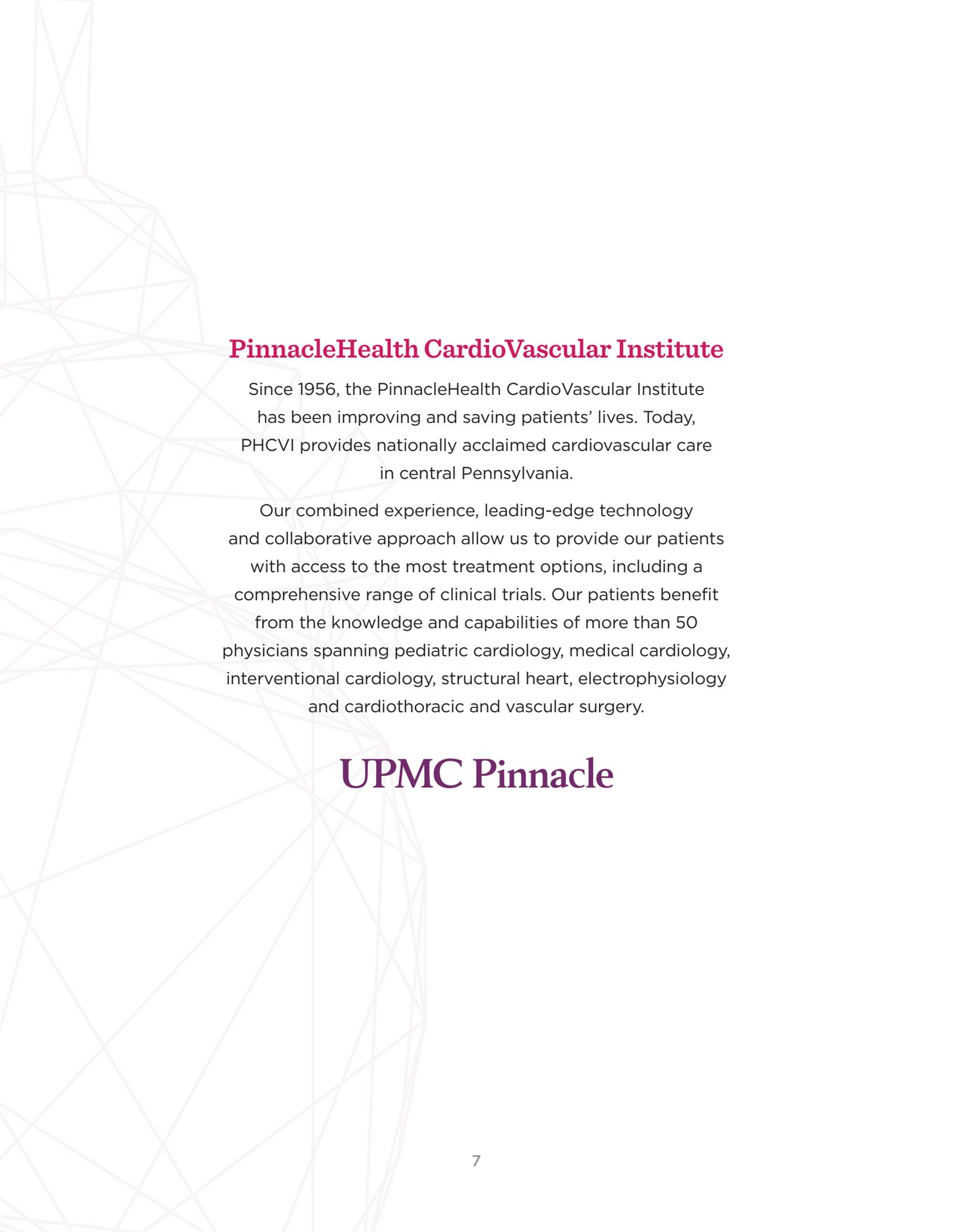


“Finding the right team of physicians can take time, but it was worth the wait,” SAYS JEN.

What should I ask during my appointment?

A 2nd opinion can help you make the most informed decision. Bring a notepad and list of questions to the appointment. Some sample questions:

Q. Could there be a different diagnosis?	A.
Q. Is there another explanation for my condition?	A.
Q. Are there any additional tests I should have?	A.
Q. What are my treatment options?	A.
Q. What happens if I wait or don't receive treatment?	A.
Q. Are there side effects to the treatment?	A.
Q. What are the risks of the treatment options?	A.
Q. How long is the recovery period for each option?	A.
Q. What are the expected outcomes for each option?	A.
Q. How much will the treatment cost? Is it covered by insurance?	A.
Q. How soon can I have my procedure if I want treatment right away?	A.



PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute

Since 1956, the PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute has been improving and saving patients' lives. Today, PHCVI provides nationally acclaimed cardiovascular care in central Pennsylvania.

Our combined experience, leading-edge technology and collaborative approach allow us to provide our patients with access to the most treatment options, including a comprehensive range of clinical trials. Our patients benefit from the knowledge and capabilities of more than 50 physicians spanning pediatric cardiology, medical cardiology, interventional cardiology, structural heart, electrophysiology and cardiothoracic and vascular surgery.

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