



# Case Study:

## Gwinnett Medical Center Advanced Cardiac Services Expansion (PCI and Cardiac Surgery)

*Gwinnett Medical Center partnered with Corazon to provide advanced levels of cardiac services, including coronary interventions and surgery, both much needed in their community.*

Addressing the needs of their community continues to be a priority for Gwinnett Medical Center (GMC), located in Lawrenceville, Georgia. In 2003, Gwinnett County was the most populous in the nation without a cardiac surgery program. GMC recognized that the value of access to advanced cardiac care without the need to travel to the Atlanta metropolitan area would be immeasurable to their patient population. Thus began an eight-year journey with Corazon...

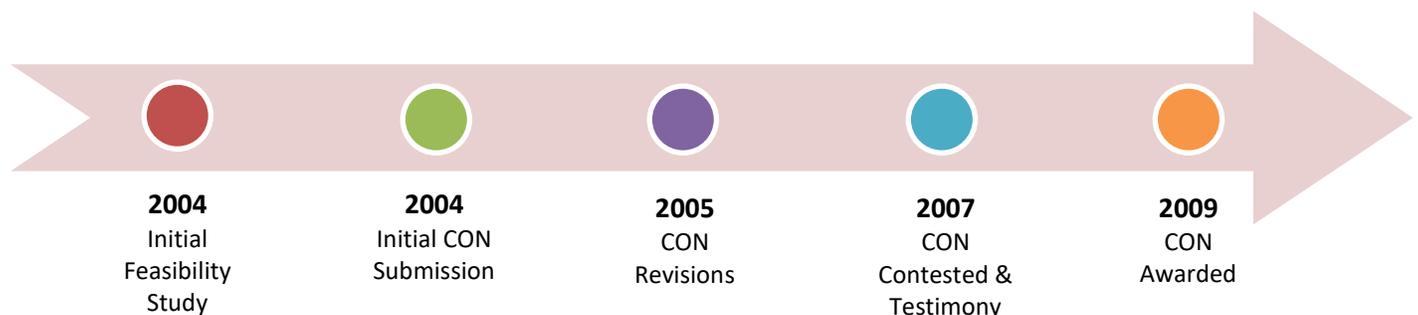


The hospital actively sought to expand in 2004, utilizing Corazon to conduct a **feasibility study** for advanced cardiac services, including percutaneous coronary interventions (PCI) and open heart surgery (OHS). A **market analysis** with volume projections and associated financial return, physician **manpower needs assessment**, and an **implementation plan** were completed based on community need and best practice standards.

Following an intensely-contested **Certificate of Need (CON)** process with the state of Georgia, GMC remained true to their resolve to offer PCI and OHS. With Corazon's implementation support, the PCI program went live in August 2011, followed by the OHS program in February 2012.

### *The First Step:*

GMC leaders recognized the challenges their patients faced in traveling to Atlanta related to distance and traffic. Of even greater concern was the delay experienced by a high number of cardiac patients who presented to the GMC Emergency Department and then required transfer to a full-service program. During the feasibility study, **Corazon presented indisputable evidence that PCI and OHS were needed in the community and could be safely and efficiently provided at GMC.**



Despite the competitive response from Atlanta-based facilities resulting in a lengthy court battle, GMC's perseverance and Corazon's assistance with preparations, data, and expert testimony eventually led to approval for interventional cardiology services and cardiac surgery at GMC.

### *Working through the expansion:*

During this time, the regulatory environment in Georgia was changing to create an exception allowing the performance of PCI without on-site OHS. GMC pursued this option to make PCI services available to the community while completing the development of OHS services in parallel.

#### **Corazon was engaged to assist with full implementation of both the PCI and OHS programs through:**

- Project oversight
- Leadership of multiple work teams
- Coordination of all aspects of dual program start-up
- Development of policies, procedures, and order sets
- Equipment selection
- Creation of the staffing plan
- Customized staff education and training
- Evaluation and adaptation of ancillary services to meet 24/7 requirements

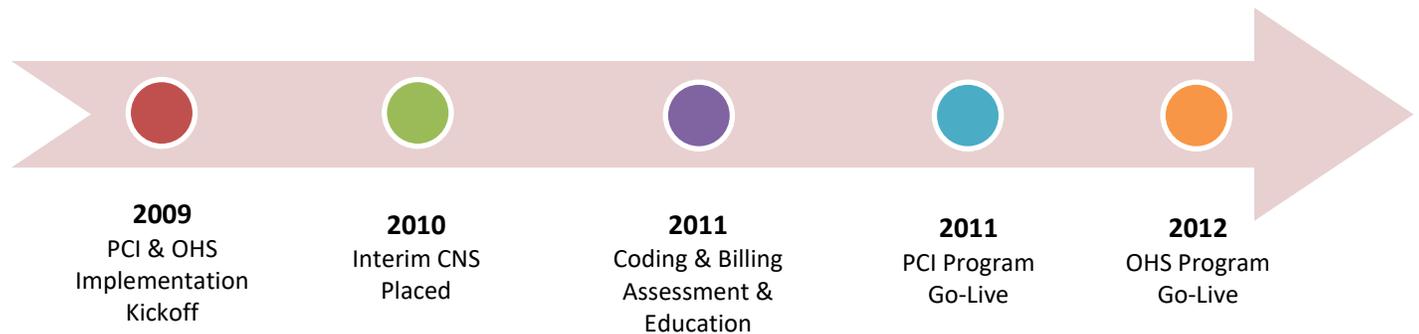
During the implementation phase, Corazon supplied an **Interim Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)** who spearheaded key aspects of the operational processes. Corazon's provision of this on-site clinical expert provided significant support to the staff and maintained project momentum.

To accommodate the new services, GMC completed a 40,000 sq.ft. facility expansion, including a new patient tower with four additional operating rooms (two cardiac-specific) and a new cardiac catheterization suite (three labs), which opened in January 2012.

**Corazon provided additional input regarding the facility planning and patient flow options – a significant component when adapting operations to new service offerings and facility.**

After obtaining exemption for PCI, the PCI implementation was prioritized to allow the early provision of services in the existing CCL while ongoing parallel efforts worked towards OHS implementation.

This dual approach allowed the community to access advanced interventional services nearly **six months earlier than if the programs had opened concurrently**. As PCI services began in August 2011, the OHS program was in the final stages of development and was launched soon after in February 2012.



A critical component of Corazon's program implementation was a **focus on quality and outcomes**. Significant efforts validated that key quality metrics and patient outcomes were monitored from day one of implementation. Corazon assisted with **dashboard creation** for both programs with clinical, volume, and fiscal indicators to enable close monitoring from the outset.

Another key aspect of program planning was to ensure that a system and materials were provided for **patient and family education**. The process begins in the surgeon's office, and then resources, materials, and staff reinforcement are supplied at every step thereafter.

### *The Results:*

- In the first 12 months of operation, the GMC PCI program performed 950 cases, exceeding initial volume projections by 34%, and a total of 354 OHS cases, a 24% increase over initial projections.
- GMC achieved and maintains formal accreditation as a Chest Pain Center.
- In 2011, GMC received the Gold Performance Award from the American College of Cardiology *Get with the Guidelines ACTION* data registry for ongoing superior performance in adherence to guidelines for providing cardiac care.
- GMC has recently become only the second hospital system in Georgia and the only hospital in North Metro Atlanta to conduct a subcutaneous implantable cardiac defibrillator procedure.
- **GMC is offering advanced, life-saving cardiac services to its patients and community!**

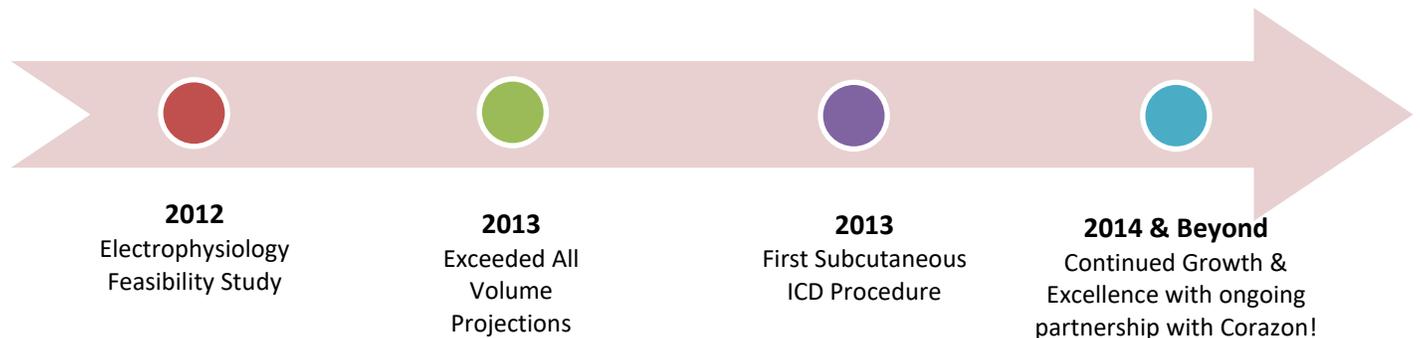
"After obtaining state-certification with Corazon's support, Gwinnett Medical Center leadership worked very closely with Corazon to help marry facility architecture and patient flow, safety processes and protocol, in addition to physician recruitment, to develop a thriving open heart and interventional cardiology center that met a critical community need and far exceeded projected volumes for the program."

Jay Dennard, COO  
Gwinnett Medical Center

### *Future Plans:*

Renovations to existing imaging rooms are currently underway in order to provide a full-service electrophysiology (EP) program, which will open in 2014. Corazon congratulates GMC on their ongoing commitment and dedication to fulfill their mission to provide state-of-the-art care for their community.

*For a more detailed explanation of this program expansion case study that involved multiple components of Corazon's services, call 412.364.8200.*



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