

HERO AT HEART

Dr. Joan Crawford



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 Macomb Hospital are working to change that. And that's why we salute this week's Hero At Heart.

Meet Dr. Joan Crawford, Cardiologist at St. John Macomb Hospital in Warren.

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

A: When I was 15. My science teacher encouraged me to apply for a summer fellowship through the American Heart Association, where I experienced all aspects of the medical profession. By the end of the fellowship I knew I didn't want to be a lab technician or a nurse – I wanted to be 'captain of the ship'. I grew up in a very rural town, and I was the first one in my family to pursue a degree. So once I decided to become a doctor, I had to find a medical school and make it happen.

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

A: Keeping the personal touch in medicine. How the doctor interacts with each patient is vital to medical care, and the challenge of spending adequate time with each patient to make them feel special is very important.

Q: What makes a good patient/physician relationship?

A: Honesty and open communication. The patient's willingness to disclose important information and the doctor's ability to listen and let their guard down are critical to establishing a solid relationship. I also firmly believe that being accessible to patients is key to maintaining that relationship.

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

A: I specialize in non-invasive testing and echocardiography, and I am currently enrolled in a CT Angiography fellowship to become certified in the use of the new multi-slice CT scanner. We will

soon be offering this procedure at St. John Macomb as well as other sites throughout the St. John Health heart network. The CT gathers 3-D, high-resolution images of the heart and major vessels within seconds, providing a non-invasive way to detect the problem. This procedure eliminates the need for heart catheterization. This exciting new scanner can also be used to locate vascular conditions such as plaque within the carotid arteries and pulmonary emboli or blockages.

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

A: Prevention. Knowing your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers is important, as they are indicators of your cardiac health. Also, be informed and know the risk factors. A balanced diet and 30 minutes of exercise most days can make a remarkable difference. Also, women should look for a 'Red Dress' doctor who is focused on the unique symptoms and requirements of a woman's cardiac care, as 50% of women die as a result of heart problems.

Q: Why did you choose St. John Health?

A: When I first visited St. John Health, I was impressed with the quality of the medical staff that included many young and 'up-and-coming' physicians and hard-working support staff – all of whom were interested in achieving a successful outcome. Now that I have been practicing here, I also admire the teaching and educational programs. However, I really want to point out that St. John Health has the finest nurses and ancillary staff of any health care system. St. John Health truly has everything that any other hospital has to offer and more.

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. Crawford at Eastlake Cardiovascular Associates, PC, in St. Clair Shores or her office in Madison Heights. If you would like to make an appointment, please call 1-888-440-REAL or visit us online at www.realmedicine.org.

Dr. Crawford is an independent physician on the medical staff at St. John Macomb Hospital.



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