

Video Transcript: Minimally Invasive Mitral Valve Replacement William's Story

To view the accompanying video of this transcript, go to:

<http://www.uchospitals.edu/specialties/heart/patients/luna-valve-replacement.html>



MR. LUNA: Terri is my life. She's my life before anything else. We've been together since we were teenagers, and shortly after Christmas we're going to be married 35 years.

MRS. LUNA: I'm not even 35 years old. I don't know what he's talking about.

MR. LUNA: And we've spent three of our anniversaries in hospitals... I started getting tired and short of breath, and it got worse and worse.

MRS. LUNA: He could not walk 10 feet down the hall and back up here without having to sit down and catch his breath. He wouldn't have made it much longer. I know that.

MR. LUNA: They discovered that my mitral valve was, as the doctor put it, horrendous. Having recovered from having my chest opened twice before, it gets worse every time, and so we were scared, you know. We were scared. My cardiologist told me that I wouldn't survive another major surgery, and I told him I'd rather die at home than on the operating table. And he said that he had heard the people at University of Chicago were doing great work with high-risk patients, and he asked that I at least go talk to them first.

MR. LUNA: Dr. Raman came in to talk to me about surgery. He said it wasn't a problem.



JAI RAMAN, MD, MMed, PhD: So we chose to go in from the side and do it through a mini-thoracotomy -- a minimally invasive approach.

MR. LUNA: And I thought that sounds pretty good.

MRS. LUNA: That was the last hope. We weren't going to do it unless they could do that.

MR. LUNA: From that moment on, Terri and I weren't afraid anymore, and I thought about it, and I didn't want the people I care about to think I gave up. If I go down, it's going to be fighting because I want to stay with them.

MRS. LUNA: He's a fighter. He's fought all along.

DR. RAMAN: With Mr. Luna, when we tried repairing his valve it was quite badly damaged, and we ended up replacing it with a very good result.



MRS. LUNA: The next day when I went in to see him he's sitting up in the bed holding this heart pillow going like this (waving) at me, no ventilator, no anything, and I...

MR. LUNA: I had just some soreness, a little bit on the side where they went in, and I... when I say soreness I'm saying discomfort. There's no comparison. The quality of life before this surgery? There was no life.

MR. LUNA: These two scars are from my first surgeries, the old way where they break open your chest, and, as you can see, it's pretty invasive with the big scars. My rib cage was actually spread apart like that. Okay. Now, here's the amazing part. They worked inside my heart this last time at University of Chicago Medical Center. That's the scar. That is the scar.

MR. LUNA: The University of Chicago Medical Center actually gave me my life back.

DR. RAMAN: It's very gratifying and satisfying to have performed such a complex operation on Mr. Luna, to see that he's actually gone back to a completely normal life and has a prospect of a nice, long life with his family, and that is very, very satisfying.

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