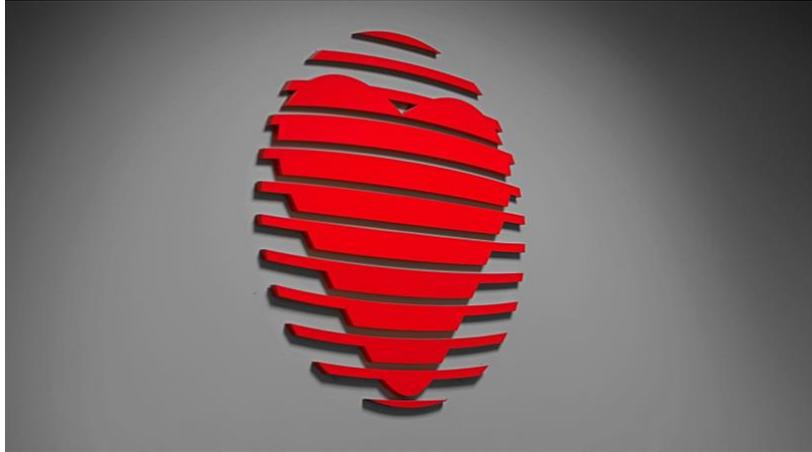


# Columbia Heart: An Independent Practice

## What Does That Mean for Our Patients?



For over 35 years, Columbia Heart has been a leader in the practice of cardiology in the Southeast. Throughout that time, our practice has remained an independent, community based practice that is owned and operated by its physicians. Although we closely collaborate with local hospitals, we maintain administrative and fiscal autonomy. With recent changes in healthcare and government mandated cuts to private practices, many physicians have sought hospital employment to maintain their revenue streams or to avoid the burden of management.

However, Columbia Heart has always been committed to providing the highest level of patient care by remaining an **independent private practice**.

What are the advantages in choosing an independent group of physicians such as Columbia Heart?

The number one advantage is that it **keeps the focus on you**, our patient.

Hospital-employed groups may require you to go to another office or even to their hospital to have your outpatient procedures, we provide most of our services on-site. If you do need hospital services, we can provide care through more than one hospital system. While hospital-employed physicians work for the hospital administrators, our employees work directly for us as your physician.

**It helps your community.**

We are an independent, small business with over 100 employees. Unlike not-for-profit

hospitals, we pay state and local taxes just like any other business. Although it may be hard to obtain, it is important that you know who owns your physician's practice. Are your medical bills being sent out of state? We are locally owned by our own physicians and not by an out of state corporation. We provide benefits and healthcare insurance to our employees who are all residents of your local community.

**It reduces your healthcare costs.**

Doctor practices owned by hospitals bill their patients through their hospital. This hospital rate is frequently 3-4 times higher than what independent practices bill. When you are billed by a hospital owned practice, your charges may be used to cover other costs to the hospital such as large media campaigns or expansion to capture greater market share. This drives up everyone's healthcare costs.

**It allows you to choose from multiple hospital systems.**

Columbia Heart is affiliated with both Palmetto Health Richland and Providence Hospitals. Our physicians are located at these hospitals on a daily basis. We provide inpatient cardiac care including coronary intervention and complex electrophysiology services. Our physicians are involved in the latest technical advancements in cardiology.

We also have outpatient clinics located in Chester, Manning, Newberry, and Winnsboro so that we better serve the needs of the Greater Columbia area.

At Columbia Heart, we value you and it is our sincerest hope that you appreciate our determination in providing you the highest level of cardiology care possible. With increasing competition among hospital systems, it has become more and more difficult for patients to navigate through the endless blitz of media campaigns. So before you make your healthcare decision based on billboards, come see how we may serve you!

**Gopi Shah, MD, FACC**

President, Columbia Heart

Member, Association of Independent Doctors



