

Second Opinion Makes Surgery 'No-Brainer' for Michiganite

Thanks to a second opinion from Cleveland Clinic, a man from Cadillac, Michigan, feels he got the best care. "When my doctors in nearby Traverse City recommended heart surgery, my health insurance company suggested I get a second opinion," says Robert Hansen, a 70-year-old retired telecommunication engineer.

"They directed me to MyConsult, an online service offered by Cleveland Clinic," he explains. "I decided to take advantage of it, due to the excellent reputation of the Clinic, which is renowned. I didn't want to risk going to just anyone for heart surgery."

MyConsult online medical second opinion program is a sophisticated, Web-based extension of Cleveland Clinic's 80-plus-year role as one of America's most respected referral institutions. The secure, online program provides remote medical second opinions from Cleveland Clinic specialists for more than 1,000 life-threatening and life-altering diagnoses.

Hansen lived with a mild case of mitral valve regurgitation for many years. When a person has this heart condition it means that one of the valves in their heart (the mitral valve) is letting blood leak backwards.

"We'd been watching this problem for about 15 years," he says. "Apparently, the leaking was minimal, but in the last year, the regurgitation increased threefold. I was feeling very lethargic and short of breath and had a lack of energy and stamina. I thought it was just old age."

Before Hansen's heart problem worsened, he adhered to a regular exercise program, which involved working out at a gym five times a week. He also played golf occasionally with a group of friends and did extensive yard work, including cutting a half-acre of grass, trimming shrubs and gardening.

"When my heart condition escalated, I was exhausted by the time we got to the second or third hole on the golf course," Hansen says. "I couldn't work out at the gym like I did before, and I could hardly finish cutting the grass, let alone do the other yard work."

When Hansen went to his cardiologist for his annual echocardiogram stress test, the physician uncovered the problem and strongly recommended immediate surgery. "He said it was life-threatening," Hansen says.

After Hansen found out about MyConsult, he asked his cardiologist what he thought about taking advantage of the service. "He enthusiastically said he was in favor of that, and he put together a whole packet of my medical information for me. He said, 'I just want the best for you.'

"I received a report back from MyConsult in less than two weeks," Hansen adds. "I got it the same day that I was meeting with the surgeon in Traverse City, and I was able to take it with me. Everything fell into place, and it was wonderful. "It ended up that the Cleveland Clinic's recommendation paralleled that of my local doctors," Hansen says. "They all said there was an 80% or better chance that repairing my mitral valve would be successful. This was due to the fact that they said I'm way above the normal health for a 70-year-old male. "If the surgeons at Traverse City had said that they could only replace my valve with a mechanical one and if the Clinic had said they could repair my valve, then the choice would be a no-brainer," he explains.

"I would have gone to Cleveland to have the surgery done. But since the opinions were parallel and I didn't want to make the seven-hour drive, I opted to have the surgery done in Traverse City."

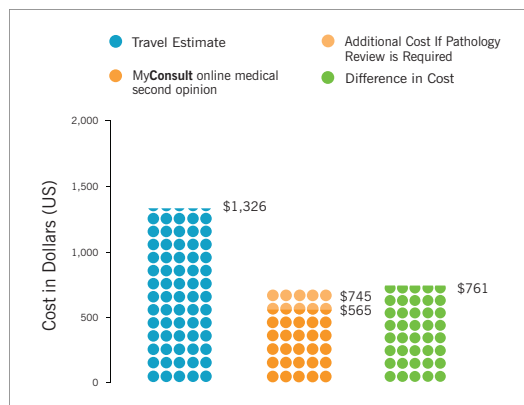
Hansen and his wife have grown children, six grandchildren and a great-granddaughter. "My son came for the operation, which was at the beginning of November," he says. "I'm feeling really good now, even though I'm still in the recovery stage. The doctors have reassured me that I won't believe how good I'll feel. We're all happy it turned out so well."

The following average cost statistics of traveling to the Cleveland Clinic from Cadillac, Michigan is based on the demographic information of the previous MyConsult patient testimonial.

Cadillac, MI to Cleveland Clinic (approx. 363 mi., 5 hrs 47 min)
Average price for two people traveling to the Cleveland Clinic:

\$700.....	Roundtrip Flight for 4 days
\$426.....	Hotel Stay 4 day, 3 nights
\$200.....	Food/Drink 4 days
\$1,326.....	Total Trip Estimate
\$565.....	MyConsult online medical second opinion
\$761.....	Difference in Cost

(Prices are based on an average stay in the City of Cleveland and may vary depending on time of year, length of stay, and advance booking of flight.) October, 2008, v1



Cost of a MyConsult online medical second opinion vs. Cost of Travel

To learn more about Cleveland Clinic's MyConsult program, visit www.ClevelandClinic.org/myconsult. Registering is easy, and if you choose to seek an online medical second opinion through Cleveland Clinic, the entire process should take 30-45 minutes. You may also contact the MyConsult office at 216.444.3223 or 800.223.2273 ext 43223.