

## Celebrating 10 years of pulmonary & cardiac rehabilitation services in St. Mary's County

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 01/06/2020

**Leonardtown, MD** - January 6, 2020 – The holidays may be over, but MedStar St. Mary's Hospital is still celebrating. January marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of the hospital's Grace Anne Dorney Pulmonary & Cardiac Rehabilitation Center. A special open house will be held Friday, Jan. 10, to commemorate the occasion and the public is invited to attend the event which will be held from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 3 to 5 p.m. The center is located inside the front entrance of the hospital just off the main lobby.

The Grace Anne Dorney Pulmonary & Cardiac Rehabilitation Center was opened on Jan. 8, 2010 and was funded by a gift from former ABC News "Nightline" anchor Ted Koppel in honor of his wife, Grace Anne Dorney Koppel. Grace Anne was diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in 2001 and was only given a few years to live. Thanks to pulmonary rehabilitation, Grace Anne has lived with and managed her condition for 18 years and has been active as an advocate and spokesperson for COPD ever since.

"When I was diagnosed and given really what I thought was a very short time to live, there was not much hope offered to patients," said Grace Anne, "but I was fortunate that I did have a script for pulmonary rehab. When I graduated, I realized that I could maintain a good life, I could travel, I could work, I could do all the things I wanted to do, but others didn't have this opportunity."

Since the center opened at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, the Dorney-Koppel Foundation has opened 12 centers in various locations across the country and is working on opening a 13th center this year at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital. The Koppels had initially planned to open centers in rural areas but have since discovered that some urban areas lack resources as well.

"We are making an exception for DC because the need is great and there is not one single pulmonary rehab center in the District of Columbia, in our national's capital," said Grace Anne. "People from DC have to go to Maryland, and it is outrageous to think there are people who are suffering and who can't breathe, and are expected to make a trip like that."

"In rural America 8.2 percent of the population is diagnosed with COPD. It is double the rate that it is in metropolitan America and the resources are far fewer in rural America. So rural America is still the area where we can make the most progress because there is the most need. But this really shouldn't exclude other areas that need our help as well."

The Grace Anne Dorney Pulmonary & Cardiac Rehabilitation Center at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital provides pulmonary and cardiac rehabilitation services designed to limit the effects of illness, prevent future recurrences or medical complications, and maximize the ability to participate in daily tasks. Rehabilitation may help individuals improve energy for tasks such as dressing and bathing, walking to the mailbox, shopping at the local store, or dining out with friends and family. The focus is on rebuilding a patient's strength and endurance to safely resume life's demands, whether that is returning to work or his or her favorite hobby. Since it opened in 2001, the center has helped more than 1,700 patients with emphysema, chronic bronchitis, COPD, asthma or other lung conditions, and cardiac conditions such as a heart attack or cardiac surgery.

"We tend to feel out of control when we are diagnosed with this disease," said Grace Anne. "Taking pulmonary or cardiac rehab empowers people to take charge of their own lives so that they know what to do if they notice changes in their own breathing and they recognize the value of exercise, nutrition, and knowledge of the disease. It is a win-win situation, both for the therapist who works with them and for the patients who learn how to be in charge again."

Visit [MedStartStMarys.org/GADC](http://MedStartStMarys.org/GADC) to learn more about the Grace Anne Dorney Pulmonary & Cardiac Rehabilitation Center or visit the open house on Jan. 10 to meet the staff, take a tour of the center, and participate in activities related to cardiopulmonary health.

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