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Cardiologist gets high certification

Hott one of few to achieve heart speciality

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A Gainesville physician has become one of a small group to receive board certification for a newly recognized speciality of cardiology.

Dr. Brenda Hott of the Northeast Georgia Heart Center has received certification in Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology from the American Board of Internal Medicine, a test that was offered for the first time this year.

Only 264 physicians nationwide were qualified to take the test and just 86 percent received certification.

"It's a fabulous asset (to the center)," said Mark E. Leimbach, chief of the department of cardiology at Northeast Georgia Medical Center. "There are a very few number of people in the whole state of Georgia who have this qualification."

Leimbach, who is also president of the heart center, said that as more individuals survive heart attacks, the growing area of cardiology has become managing those patients, many of whom are prone to congestive heart failure.

Hott, who developed a community-based heart failure project at the center, specializes in coordinating care for these individuals

"A lot of the people that used to previously die now survive their heart attacks," she said. "But often times there can still be significant heart damage and they end up down the road with problems with heart failure."

Hott graduated from James Madison University and later received a medical degree from Emory School of Medicine. She went on to complete a fellowship in cardiology at Emory and then taught at the university for six years.

She is also board certified in Internal Medicine and Cardiovascular Disease, but said this test still proved to be a challenge.

"I never want to take that test again," she said. "It was the hardest board exam I've ever taken."

Leimbach said studies have shown that physicians with advanced training, like Hott, are more likely to help their patients improve their quality of life and reduce

death rates.

"As heart disease remains the No. 1 disease in the western world, more and more of these people are developing congestive heart failure," he said. "And specialists like (Hott) are a fabulous asset."

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