

University Of Miami Health System Welcomes Internationally Renowned Cardiac Surgeon Joseph Lamelas, M.D.

Dr. Lamelas to become UHealth's new Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Joseph Lamelas, M.D., an internationally recognized expert cardiac surgeon who helped pioneer minimally invasive approaches to cardiac surgery, has joined UHealth – the University of Miami Health System as chief of cardiothoracic surgery and professor of surgery in the Miller School of Medicine.



Joseph Lamelas, M.D.

He will begin his new role on January 21.

Dr. Lamelas has performed more than 16,000 cardiac surgeries throughout his 28-year career, 7,000 of which have employed a minimally invasive approach.

“Dr. Lamelas is internationally recognized for his outstanding skills, outcomes, and innovation in cardiac surgery. His arrival at the University of Miami strengthens our luminary program in cardiovascular disease,” said Edward Abraham, M.D., executive vice president for health affairs and CEO of the University of Miami Health System. “Having Dr. Lamelas as our chief of cardiothoracic surgery solidifies UHealth as the preeminent center for cardiovascular disease in South Florida, and one of the truly elite institutions in the country.”

Dr. Lamelas returns to Miami, the city where he spent 26 years perfecting his minimally invasive techniques, after spending two years in Houston as the associate chief of the Division of Cardiac Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine, CHI St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital, Texas Heart Institute. Prior to that, he served as the chief of cardiac surgery at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, where

he single-handedly rebuilt the cardiac surgery program and consistently achieved some of the best cardiac surgery survival rates in the nation.

When practicing in Miami, cardiac surgery outcomes for Dr. Lamelas were consistently among the best in Florida, and he performed the highest volume of cardiac surgery in the state, with more than 700 cases annually, on average.

“Miami is very personal to me, so I am very excited to return and be a part of South Florida’s only truly academic medical center,” Dr. Lamelas said. “Cardiac surgery is the pillar of any health care institution, especially in the academic setting which allows you to fully commit to innovation.”

While Dr. Lamelas offers patients every cardiac surgical procedure except heart transplant, he is renowned for pioneering and perfecting a minimally invasive approach to cardiac surgery. The techniques he developed and the surgical instruments he invented to facilitate intricate procedures he now applies to almost all cardiac surgeries, including aortic and mitral valve replacements, double-valve replacement, triple-valve replacement, repair of congenital cardiac defects, removal of cardiac tumors, bypass surgery, and a minimally invasive approach to replacement of the ascending aorta — a procedure Lamelas himself developed.

Dr. Lamelas’ minimally invasive approach, which he named “The Miami Method,” involves a less than 2-inch incision on the right side of the chest that does not require opening the breastbone.

“I realized in 2004 that I needed to do something to differentiate myself and advance the field of cardiac surgery,” Dr. Lamelas said. “I began working on a minimally invasive technique and saw the necessity to create new instruments that would help me perform these operations.”

Dr. Lamelas has since trained more than 1,000 surgeons from around the world in this approach. Minimally invasive cardiac surgery results in less physical pain and trauma, less blood loss, reduced risk of infection, shorter hospital stays, quicker recuperation, and better long-term outcomes than more traditional cardiac surgical procedures. In addition, research conducted by Dr. Lamelas demonstrates that high-risk patients — including the elderly, the obese, those with chronic lung diseases, such as COPD, and those with kidney disease — who are too frail for traditional open-chest operations are better able to withstand a minimally invasive cardiac surgery.

“We are delighted that Dr. Lamelas will be joining the University of Miami. He brings innovative cardiac surgery skills that will benefit our patients tremendously,” said Jeffrey Goldberger, M.D., chief of the University of Miami Health System Cardiovascular Division. “His arrival gives us a unique opportunity to further enhance the spectrum of cardiovascular services offered at UHealth, and to continue to innovate and set the future standards of cardiovascular care. We are excited to work collaboratively to achieve the highest quality care and best outcomes.”