

# First open heart surgery in city

SPIRITS ran high among nurses, doctors and staff at St Anne's hospital on Monday afternoon, as the first person to undergo open heart surgery in a Pietermaritzburg hospital was wheeled out of theatre after a successful heart bypass.

"I am happy to report that the surgery went well and that the patient will now spend a short period with us in the hospital to recover," said hospital manager Christo Becker.

Dr James Fulton headed up the team that performed the heart bypass and was assisted by another cardio-thoracic surgeon, Mr Rob Kleinloog, Dr Mark Bainbridge, a cardiac-anaesthetist, and a very experienced surgical team.

Previously Maritzburg people who needed open heart surgery had to travel to a Durban hospital, often making it difficult for loved ones to be by their sides after the surgery.

"We believe that the addition of these new procedures will fill an important void, that to date has not been filled in this part of the country", said Becker.

The road to the life saving open surgery procedures, in Maritzburg, began with St Anne's opening its cardiac catheterisation laboratory in January and then the amendment of theatre facilities to accommodate open heart surgery.

"We have managed to secure the services of a cardio-thoracic surgeon and have revamped our surgical facilities to suit the needs of cardio-thoracic surgery," said Becker.

Dr James Fulton recently joined the Netcare

**'We are very proud to be the first hospital in the City of Choice to bring this kind of technology'**

**- Christo Becker,  
St Anne's hospital manager**

St Anne's team as its resident cardio-thoracic surgeon and the hospital also boasts three cardiologists. Coronary artery bypass surgery, which is an open-heart procedure, can only be performed by a cardio-thoracic surgeon.

"We are very proud to be the first hospital in the City of Choice to bring this kind of technology and surgery to the doorstep of Midlands patients", said Becker.

