Viral Cardiomyopathy Leads Country Star Randy Travis To Get Heart Device

Ryan Jaslow

Country music superstar Randy Travis is hospitalized in Texas in critical condition as he battles viral cardiomyopathy, according to the singer's publicist, Kirt Webster.

"Contrary to reports, Randy Travis has not undergone heart surgery," Webster said in an emailed statement Tuesday afternoon. "Travis is being treated for viral cardiomyopathy. Travis was admitted into a Texas hospital on Sunday and underwent placement of an IMPELLA peripheral left ventricular assist device [LVAD] for stabilization prior to transferring hospitals." The device is inserted through a catheter in a minimally invasive procedure.

Travis remains in critical condition, he added.

CBS News chief medical correspondent Dr. Jon LaPook, who is not involved in Travis' care, explained that cardiomyopathy is a disease of the heart muscle: Simply put, "cardio" means heart, and "myopathy" means problem with the muscle, he said.

The condition can cause the heart to become enlarged, thick or rigid, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. The weaker heart is then less able to pump blood, which can lead to heart failure or a potentially fatal irregular heartbeat called an arrhythmia.

The heart typically pumps out about 60 percent of its blood volume on every beat, explains Dr. Randall Starling, a heart failure specialist at the cardiovascular medicine department of the Cleveland Clinic, but a patient with cardiomyopathy might only eject 20 percent or less.

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