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Specialists at The Heart Institute at Staten Island University Hospital Perform First Hybrid Atrial Fibrillation Ablation Procedure Ever in New York City.

**Advanced Minimally Invasive Procedure Corrects
Hard-to-Control Chronic Atrial Fibrillation and Restores the Heart's Natural
Electrical Rhythm.**

STATEN ISLAND, NY— The very first Hybrid Atrial Fibrillation Ablation, or A-Fib, procedure in New York City has been performed at The Heart Institute (THI) at Staten Island University Hospital. The operation was conducted on August 26, 2014 by a skilled cardiothoracic surgery team headed by electrophysiologist Marcin Kowalski, MD, a specialist in heart rhythm disorders, and cardiothoracic surgeon, Alexander Wohler, MD. This advanced minimally invasive surgical procedure to correct chronic or intractable A-Fib is a major step forward in helping patients to overcome this often hard-to-control and potentially life-threatening cardiac disorder.

Atrial fibrillation is a common heart rhythm disorder in which the heart beats at an irregular and often rapid pace. Electrical impulses cause the heart's upper chambers, or atria, to quiver, rather than contract. The upper chambers of the heart are therefore out of synch with the lower chambers. This disruption can result in poor blood flow and, if gone uncorrected, can lead to stroke or heart failure.

The specialists at The Heart Institute are experienced at diagnosing and treating A-Fib with the latest procedures, techniques and technologies. Hybrid A-Fib Ablation is such a procedure.

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Under the leadership of cardiothoracic surgeon Joseph T. McGinn Jr., MD, Hybrid A-Fib Ablation surgery is the latest in a range of advanced cardiac procedures available at The Heart Institute. The surgery is performed exclusively in The Heart Institute's Cardiothoracic Surgical Suite and EP lab by skilled cardiothoracic surgeons and electrophysiologists. The Heart Institute's Patient Care Unit Management team is on site 24 hours a day to assist patients and families in preparation for the procedure, and for follow-up care.

"At THI we remain at the forefront of cutting-edge advancements in cardiothoracic intervention to eradicate potentially life-threatening conditions," Dr. McGinn explains. "Hybrid A-Fib Ablation is a groundbreaking minimally invasive technique that yields exception results for patients suffering from atrial fibrillation. It's emblematic of the way we approach complex cardiac problems and design advanced procedures to enhance our patients' longevity and quality of life."

Hybrid A-Fib Ablation combines minimally invasive surgery and a catheter-based approach to ablate the irregular rhythm by the use of epicardial and endocardial catheters by freezing and cauterizing the heart muscle on the areas from which A-Fib typically arises; these catheters are placed outside and inside surfaces of the heart, respectively. With Hybrid A-Fib Ablation, once the patient is under anesthesia, the cardiac surgery team begins to ablate the region of the heart responsible for A-Fib.

Three small incisions are made in the abdomen; it's far less invasive than standard open-heart surgery. Surgeons at The Heart Institute use a videoscope that is passed through the incisions to gain access to the affected area of the heart. It is then treated with radiofrequency energy that essentially 'shuts down' the abnormal impulses in that section of the heart. The heart continues to beat during the procedure; a heart-lung bypass machine is not needed. Subsequently, the electrophysiologist uses a balloon-tipped catheter, inserted via the blood vessels of the groin, to ablate additional areas from inside the heart. The procedure restores the heart's natural electrical impulses.

When the procedure is complete, the patient is brought to THI's Cardiac Intensive Care Unit, where he or she is closely monitored. Most patients can leave within 48 hours, and return to normal life in a matter of a week or two. Patients typically remain on anticoagulant medication for at-least several weeks following the procedure.

“Implementing new procedures like Hybrid A-Fib Ablation surgery gives us a tremendous amount of satisfaction,” Dr. Kowalski explains. “Atrial fibrillation can be vexing, yet at THI we’ve combined visionary medicine with high technology to achieve exceptional results.”

Dr. Wohler concurs: “Traditional cardiothoracic surgery always poses certain challenges, but with Hybrid A-Fib Ablation, we’re able to treat a very complex cardiac problem with sophisticated technology via minimal intervention. As a surgeon, any time you can minimize the size of the incision and achieve a positive result, that is the optimal goal. We’ve done exactly that at THI with Hybrid A-Fib Ablation surgery.”

The Heart Institute is dedicated to helping patients understand A-Fib, and to providing state-of-the-art treatment options. According to the American Heart Association, approximately 2.7 million people suffer from A-Fib in the United States. By integrating Hybrid A-Fib Ablation surgery into its array of cardiac surgical services, THI stands at the forefront in the treatment of the disorder.

"I am so glad I was the first in New York to have this procedure," explains James Fallucca, a retired assistant superintendent for the New York City Housing Authority who underwent Hybrid A-Fib Ablation surgery this summer. "I feel great," says the Staten Island resident. "I have no more A-Fib issues, and hope I have helped others cure their A-Fib issues that I suffered with for years."

The Heart Institute at Staten Island University Hospital is proud to be among the very few cardiac care centers in the Northeast offering Hybrid A-Fib Ablation surgery. THI has been at the forefront of numerous pioneering procedures to diagnose and treat a range of heart conditions, and to offer cutting-edge remedial procedures that restore heart health and give patients a new lease on life.

For more information on groundbreaking Hybrid A-Fib Ablation surgery at The Heart Institute at Staten Island University Hospital, contact: Richard A. Clarke at cell: 917.868.1407, or via email at: RClarke@theHeartInstituteNY.com. Or contact John P. Demoleas at 718.226.6462, or via email at: jdemoleas@siuh.edu. Visit The Heart Institute's Web site at: <http://www.theheartinstitute.com/>

The Heart Institute opened in 2001 and operates at the North Campus of Staten Island University Hospital at 475 Seaview Avenue. It is one of the nation's leading heart hospitals, known for its pioneering techniques in minimally invasive heart surgery, including The McGinn Technique (MICS CABG), taught at The Heart Institute since 1995. Today, The Heart Institute performs the most advanced treatments in minimally invasive cardiac surgery and electrophysiology (A-fib), procedures such as Hybrid A-fib Ablation, in addition to the most advanced diagnostic technologies, post-surgical outpatient care, and cardiac prevention programs. The Heart Institute at Staten Island University Hospital is part of the North Shore – LIJ Health System.

Video Attachments:

3min Epicardial Ablation video.m4v

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