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Word-class technique available for arrhythmia sufferers in Staten Island

STATEN ISLAND, NY – November 15, 2011 — The Heart Institute at Staten Island University Hospital(SIUH) saves the lives of countless patients who have a common rhythm disorder know as Paroxysmal Atrial Fibrillation by performing a revolutionary procedure known as **cryoballoon ablation**. This procedure is being performed by one of the hospital's prestigious electrophysiologists, **Dr. Marcin Kowalski**, who was the first doctor in the Tri –State area to do so after FDA approval. This cryoablation catheter provides an efficient straight forward approach and eliminates the use of dangerous chemicals and extreme heat.

The cryoballoon ablation technique uses equipment specially designed by Medtronic™ such as the CryoConsole®, the Arctic Front® catheter, and the FreezorMAX® to isolate and freeze pulmonary tissue.

The Arctic Front® catheter resembles a balloon when inflated and functions by blocking the circumference of the pulmonary artery veins within the left atrium. Once the vein is tightly occluded, the ablation process of freezing the tissue commences. The balloon automatically deflates at 20 degrees Celsius, at which point the procedure is repeated two to three times per vein to ensure the best chance of success. The small scar formed acts as insulation and prevents unwanted electrical signals from entering the heart. The pen-sized device cryo-balloon has proven benefits including: greater medical stability, protection of surrounding heart tissue, and decreased clotting risk. During the procedure, the CryoConsole® administers nitrous oxide as a freezing agent through the Arctic Front balloon® and FreezorMAX® catheters. Once the process is completed, the heart will beat according to its regular rhythm with a 69.9% success rate.

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Both physicians and patients acclaim the cryoballoon ablation technique because of its success rate and ease of operation.

“Doctors like the new procedure because it is safer, faster, and less complicated than ever before. Patients don’t feel the chest discomfort as before and have significantly lower risk of developing additional arrhythmias,” said Dr. Kowalski.

Over 50, cryoballoon ablations have been performed with this equipment this year in Staten Island. Dr. Kowalski, a member of the Comprehensive Cardiac Care team at The Heart Institute at Staten Island University Hospital (SIUH,) is the only physician performing this technique in Staten Island and regularly travels around the country to teach other servers.

“Not many hospitals have the equipment or cutting edge technology to perform the procedure. At The Heart Institute we have new EP labs, so people no longer need to leave the island to obtain the best cardiac care,” said Dr. Kowalski.

Dr. Marcin Kowalski was involved in trialing the procedure between 2007-2009 on patients who were deemed unfit for the traditional chemical treatment. The original technology was developed in Canada in 2005 and has since helped over 20,000 people across US, Canada, and Europe.

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