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Abington Hospital-Jefferson Health among first in state offering Watchman Implant to patients with atrial fibrillation

Newly approved implant offers patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation an alternative to long-term warfarin medication.

Abington Hospital-Jefferson Health is among the first in Pennsylvania to offer patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (AF) an alternative to long-term warfarin medication with the newly approved **WATCHMAN** Left Atrial Appendage Closure (LAAC) Implant.

For patients with AF who are considered suitable for warfarin by their physicians, but who have reason to seek a non-drug alternative, the Watchman LAAC Implant is an implant alternative to reduce their risk of AF-related stroke. The Watchman Implant closes off an area of the heart called the left atrial appendage (LAA) to keep harmful blood clots from entering the blood stream and potentially causing a stroke. By closing off the LAA, the risk of stroke may be reduced and, over time, patients may be able to stop taking warfarin.

People with atrial fibrillation have a five times greater risk of stroke. Atrial fibrillation can cause blood to pool and form clots in the LAA. For patients with non-valvular AF, the LAA is believed to be the source of the majority of stroke-causing blood clots. If a clot forms in the LAA, it can increase one's risk of having a stroke. Blood clots can break loose and travel in the blood stream to the brain, lungs and other parts of the body.

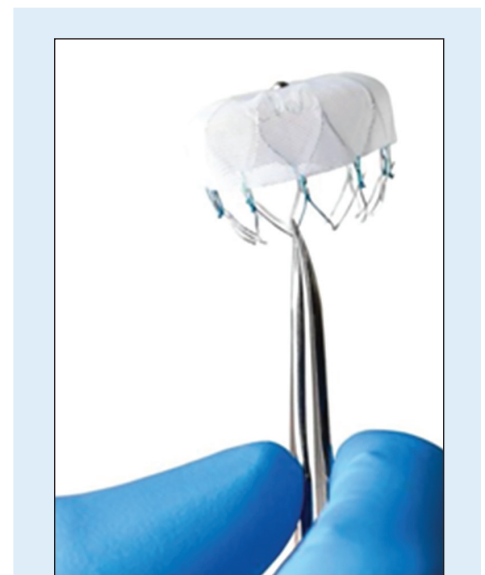
"The new Watchman LAAC implant provides physicians with a stroke

risk reduction option for patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation," said Richard Borge, MD, medical director, Heart Rhythm Center at Abington Hospital. "For those seeking an alternative to warfarin, the Watchman Implant offers a potentially life-changing stroke risk treatment option, which could free them from the challenges of long-term warfarin therapy."

Implanting the Watchman device is a one-time procedure that usually lasts about an hour. Following the procedure, patients typically need to stay in the hospital 24 hours.

About Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial Fibrillation (AF) is a heart condition where the upper chambers of the heart (atrium) beat too fast with irregular rhythm (fibrillation). AF is the most common cardiac arrhythmia, currently affecting more than five million Americans. Twenty percent of all strokes occur in patients with AF, and AF-related strokes are more frequently fatal and disabling. The most common treatment to reduce stroke risk in patients with AF is blood-thinning warfarin medication. Despite its proven efficacy, long-term warfarin medication is not well-tolerated by some patients and carries a significant risk for bleeding complications. Nearly half of AF patients eligible for warfarin are currently untreated due to tolerance and adherence issues.



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The Watchman Implant is designed to close the LAA in order to keep harmful blood clots from the LAA from entering the blood stream and potentially causing a stroke for higher risk patients with non-valvular AF. The Watchman Implant has been approved for use in Europe since 2005 and is FDA-approved in the United States. It has been implanted in more than 10,000 patients and is approved in more than 70 countries around the world.

About Abington – Jefferson Health

Abington – Jefferson Health encompasses Abington Hospital in Abington, Abington – Lansdale Hospital in Hatfield Township, two urgent Care Centers and five convenient outpatient facilities, which include Abington Health Center – Willow Grove, Abington Health Center – Warminster, Abington Health Center – Blue Bell, Abington Health Center – Lower Gwynedd and Abington Health Center – Montgomeryville. More than 1,400 physicians are on staff at both

Abington Hospital and Abington – Lansdale Hospital. In addition, some physicians are members of Abington Health Physicians, an employed network of primary care physicians and specialists. Abington – Jefferson Health is part of Jefferson Health and Jefferson, a newly formed organization dedicated to providing the highest quality, compassionate clinical care for patients, educating the health professionals of tomorrow, and discovering new treatments and therapies that will define the future of health care.



Richard Borge, Jr., MD completed his fellowship training at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in cardiology and electrophysiology. He is board certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiovascular Disease, and Cardiac Electrophysiology. Dr. Borge has received multiple awards and recognitions for his medical performance and research. He graduated with High Honors for his undergraduate achievements and received the Dubb's Research Fellow at Sidney Kimmel Medical College. Throughout his career, Dr. Borge served as a Clinical Fellow of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and has published many studies and research findings in his industry. Dr. Borge currently serves as the Director of Atrial Fibrillation Program and a Medical Director of the Heart Rhythm Center at Abington Hospital - Jefferson Health. For more information about the Watchman Implant, please email rborge@amscardiology.com.