



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SAINT THOMAS RESEARCH INSTITUTE CHOSEN AS SITE FOR INNOVATIVE HYPERTENSION DEVICE TRIAL

NASHVILLE, TN - Saint Thomas Research Institute has been chosen as the partnering site in Middle Tennessee for a study of the Rheos Baroreflex Hypertension Therapy System, a groundbreaking device-based treatment for persistent high blood pressure.

Hypertension affects between 32 and 40 percent of adult Americans, according to the National Health and Nutrition Survey. Normalizing blood pressure has been shown to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke by up to half, but an estimated 16 million Americans medically treated for hypertension are unable to achieve a blood pressure lower than 140/90 mm Hg.

To help those patients, CVRx Inc., a Minneapolis-based company whose medical leaders have many years of experience developing implantable medical devices, created the Rheos system, which uses the baroreflex, the body's natural blood pressure regulation system, to control blood pressure.

The Rheos Pivotal Trial is enrolling 300 patients at sites across the United States and in Europe. Three of the study's investigators are affiliated with Saint Thomas Health Services. They are:

- Dr. Mark Houston, Director of the Hypertension Institute of Nashville at Saint Thomas Hospital, who is enrolling and managing trial patients;
- Dr. Jon Levine, an endocrinologist and internist, who is enrolling and managing trial patients at Baptist Hospital;
- Dr. William Edwards, a vascular surgeon with The Surgical Clinic, who will implant the device in trial patients at Saint Thomas Hospital.

The treatment calls for a battery-powered pulse generator to be implanted under the skin near the collarbone and for two carotid sinus leads to connect to the left and right carotid sinus in the neck. The system activates the baroreflex, which signals the brain that the patient's blood pressure has risen. The brain then acts to lower blood pressure by sending signals to various parts of the body to reduce blood pressure.

"The development of an implantable surgical device around the carotid artery offers new hope to hypertension patients for significant reduction in blood pressure and cardiovascular events," says Dr. Houston, whose institute has been designated a Cardiovascular Center of Excellence by the Consortium for Southeastern Hypertension Control.

Recently published abstract results in the *Journal of Hypertension* showed a significant drop in blood pressure with the Rheos system at 12 months. One-year results from 13 patients showed an average decrease in systolic and diastolic blood pressure of 39 mmHg and 26 mmHg, respectively.

“The Rheos system shows tremendous promise in being able to help a group of patients who have tried other treatments without success and are often taking handfuls of pills each day just to stop their blood pressure from rising,” said Dr. Edwards. “We’re proud to have Saint Thomas Health Services play a pioneering role in this important international study.”

For more information on the Rheos system study, including participant qualifications, visit www.rheosstudy.com or call 866-913-2584. For more information on CVRx, visit www.cvr.com.

About Saint Thomas Research Institute

Saint Thomas Research Institute is a clinical research site consisting of four community hospitals in Middle Tennessee with access to more than 2,000 physicians and 1,600 beds. A partner and systemwide resource that simplifies the research process, Saint Thomas Research Institute takes on the bulk of the administrative load so that physicians can concentrate on working with their patients. The Institute is nimble, responsive, and efficient, using an outsourced Institutional Review Board to get studies launched and enrolled quickly. For more information, contact Wesley Lauterbach, Director of Business Development, at 615-222-3077 or wlauterbach@stthomas.org.

About Saint Thomas Health Services

Saint Thomas Health Services is a faith-based ministry with more than 8,000 associates serving Middle Tennessee. Saint Thomas Health Services’ regional health system consists of four hospitals - Baptist and Saint Thomas in Nashville, Middle Tennessee Medical Center in Murfreesboro and Hickman Community Hospital in Centerville - and a comprehensive network of affiliated joint ventures in diagnostics, cardiac services and ambulatory surgery as well as medical practices, the Center for Spinal Surgery, clinics and rehabilitation facilities. STHS is a member of Ascension Health, a Catholic organization that is the largest not-for-profit health system in the United States. For more information, visit www.sths.com.

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