

**Media contact:**

Kelly M. Perritt

[kelly.perritt@providencehospitals.com](mailto:kelly.perritt@providencehospitals.com)

Mobile: 803-315-1515

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**PROVIDENCE HEALTH: FIRST IN THE MIDLANDS TO IMPLANT  
THE WATCHMAN™ LAA CLOSURE DEVICE**

**COLUMBIA, SC** – Providence Health is the first hospital in the Midlands to implant the newly approved WATCHMAN device for patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (A-fib). The implant took place today.

People with A-fib have a five times greater risk of stroke.(1) Blood thinning medicines such as warfarin have long been the standard method of preventing stroke-causing blood clots in A-fib patients. However, warfarin has its own lengthy list of potential complications and side effects. Those who cannot tolerate the medicine may now have an alternative.

Atrial fibrillation can cause blood to pool and form clots in an area of the heart called the left atrial appendage (LAA). These blood clots can break loose and travel in the blood stream to the brain, lungs, and other parts of the body. In patients with non-valvular A-fib, the LAA is believed to be the major source of stroke-causing blood clots.(2)

The WATCHMAN Implant closes off the LAA, which prevents harmful blood clots in the LAA from traveling to the blood stream and potentially causing a stroke.

“This is a safer and effective alternative for many patients who previously had bleeding complications or were unable to tolerate blood thinners,” says Dr. Manish Jain, an Electrophysiologist (Heart rhythm specialist) at Providence Health who will be implanting the device. “We are excited to be able to offer this cutting-edge technology that leads to enhanced quality of life for our patients in the Midlands.”

Implanting the WATCHMAN Device is a one-time minimally invasive procedure that usually lasts about an hour. Following the procedure, patients typically need to stay in the hospital for 24 hours.

**About Atrial Fibrillation:**

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a heart condition where the upper chambers of the heart (atrium) beat too fast and with irregular rhythm (fibrillation). AF is the most common cardiac arrhythmia, currently affecting more than five million Americans.(3) Twenty percent of all strokes occur in patients with AF, and AF-related strokes are more frequently fatal and disabling.(4,5) 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.(6)

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 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.

For more information on the WATCHMAN Implant, please visit: [watchmanimplant.com](http://watchmanimplant.com).

**About Boston Scientific:**

Boston Scientific is a worldwide developer, manufacturer and marketer of medical devices that are used in a broad range of interventional medical specialties. For more information, please visit: [www.bostonscientific.com](http://www.bostonscientific.com).

**About Providence Health:**

A part of LifePoint Health, Providence Health is the leading provider of cardiovascular and orthopedic services in the Midlands. Providence is composed of two hospitals, sixteen physician practices, a network of rehabilitation centers, two sleep centers, an imaging and diagnostics lab, a school of cardiac diagnostics and an accredited chest pain center. In total, Providence employs more than 2 Page 2 than 1,800 dedicated staff. Founded in 1938 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Providence is known statewide for outstanding clinical quality and compassionate care. Providence Health was recognized nationally by U.S. News & World Report, tying for second place as the Best Hospital in South Carolina. In addition, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services awarded Providence Health a 4-star rating, which is the highest rank issued to a Columbia health care entity. The Providence open heart surgery program has consistently ranked in the top 15 percent of open heart programs in the nation. Both orthopedics and cardiac services have received the South Carolina BlueCross BlueShield Blue Distinction Center designation. For more information, visit [YourProvidenceHealth.com](http://YourProvidenceHealth.com).

References

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3. Colilla et al., Am J Cardiol. 2013; 112:1142-1147
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**WATCHMAN™ Left Atrial Appendage Closure Device from Boston Scientific**

*The WATCHMAN Device is a permanent implant designed to close the left atrial appendage in the heart in an effort to reduce the risk of stroke. With all medical procedures there are risks associated with the*

*implant procedure and the use of the device. The risks include but are not limited to accidental heart puncture, air embolism, allergic reaction, anemia, anesthesia risks, arrhythmias, AV (Arteriovenous) fistula, bleeding or throat pain from the TEE (Trans Esophageal Echo) probe, blood clot or air bubbles in the lungs or other organs, bruising at the catheter insertion site, clot formation on the WATCHMAN™ Closure Device, cranial bleed, excessive bleeding, gastrointestinal bleeding, groin puncture bleed, hypotension, infection/pneumonia, pneumothorax, pulmonary edema, pulmonary vein obstruction, renal failure, stroke, thrombosis and transient ischemic attack. In rare cases death can occur. Be sure to talk with your doctor so that you thoroughly understand all of the risks and benefits associated with the implantation of the WATCHMAN Device.*

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