Piedmont Heart Institute Hosts Chronic Total Occlusion Workshop

Cardiologists convene to discuss difficult heart procedure.

Atlanta, Ga. (September XX, 2011)—Piedmont Heart Institute hosted renowned cardiologists from around the world August 28 through 31 for a workshop focused on a procedure to treat coronary chronic total occlusions (CTO). Piedmont Heart Institute cardiologists performed more than 20 such cases over the three-day period with more than 35 internationally recognized cardiologists in attendance. The course was organized by the Piedmont Heart Institute and led by directors Doctors Dimitri Karmpaliotis, David Kandzari and Nicholas Lembo.

“A CTO represents a coronary artery that has been occluded for a long period of time, typically months, if not years,” said Dr. Karmpaliotis. “Among individuals identified with coronary artery disease, CTOs are common, occurring in as many as one-third of patients.”

Despite remarkable advances in interventional cardiology over the past three decades, revascularization decisions for patients with CTOs have remained a dilemma.

“Because of technical challenges to treat these difficult lesions, historically lower rates of procedural success and uncertainties regarding patient selection, CTOs have been described as the last great barrier to success in interventional cardiology,” commented Dr. Kandzari. “In particular, the presence of a CTO accounts for the most common reason for referral to coronary bypass surgery. Alternatively, in patients who have undergone prior bypass surgery, it is a frequent indication for treatment with medical therapy alone, though it may not necessarily be the best option.”

As a minimally invasive procedure, doctors enter the body through an artery in the leg to approach the heart. Using guide wires the size of a human hair and with the help of live X-ray imaging, they advance through the coronary blockage. Once through, a balloon is inflated allowing for the placement of very small, specialized metal stents. Embedded within the artery wall, the stents serve as a scaffolding to help hold the artery open and prevent recurrent blockage.

“The procedure requires a great deal of dedicated skill and practice,” Dr. Lembo noted. “Recently, considerable success has been achieved in CTO angioplasty and stenting, representing a clinically significant and meaningful advancement beyond conventional treatment. Through adoption of sophisticated techniques and advanced training, interventional cardiologists at the Piedmont Heart Institute have established one of the nation’s largest CTO programs with some of the highest reported success rates.”

Through leadership in clinical trials, education and development of new technique and technology in treatment of CTOs, Piedmont Heart Institute is internationally recognized as a leading center in the treatment of complex coronary disease.
For more information about Piedmont Heart Institute and to take a free, online heart risk assessment, visit piedmontheart.org.

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**About Piedmont Heart Institute**

Piedmont Heart Institute (PHI) is the first integrated cardiovascular healthcare delivery program affiliated with a community health system in greater Atlanta and is headquartered on the campus of Piedmont Hospital, a 481-bed tertiary care facility offering all major medical, surgical and diagnostic services. Offering a continuum of patient care, including primary and secondary prevention, outpatient and inpatient cardiovascular care, and appropriate quality measures and metrics to demonstrate enhanced outcomes, Piedmont Heart Institute combines more than 100 affiliated cardiovascular specialists in Piedmont Heart Institute Physicians with over 30 locations to propel new programs in cardiovascular research, education and excellence in prevention, arrhythmias, coronary and vascular intervention, stroke and cardiac imaging. Locations span from south of Atlanta in Fayette and Coweta counties to north of Blairsville in Murphy, N.C. South of Atlanta, Piedmont Heart Institute Physicians practice at both Piedmont Fayette Hospital and Piedmont Newnan Hospital. Piedmont Heart Institute is part of Piedmont Healthcare (PHC), a not-for-profit organization that also includes Piedmont Fayette Hospital, a 143-bed, acute-care community hospital in Fayetteville and one of the 100 Top Hospitals® in the nation; Piedmont Mountainside Hospital, a 42-bed community hospital in Jasper; and Piedmont Newnan Hospital, a 143-bed, acute-care community hospital in Newnan. Piedmont Healthcare also is the parent company of the Piedmont Physicians Group, with more than 100 primary care physicians in over 30 offices throughout metro Atlanta; the Piedmont Clinic, a 600-member physician network; and Piedmont Philanthropy, the philanthropic entity for private fundraising initiatives. For more information, visit piedmontheart.org.