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### **Advances in A-Fib Procedures Benefit Patients & Providers**

*Groundbreaking techniques performed at Saint Francis and Saint Mary's Hospitals*

**WATERBURY, Conn. (November 27, 2018)** Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford and Saint Mary's Hospital in Waterbury are the only hospitals in the state performing atrial fibrillation ablations using a fluoroless technique which provides increased safety to patients with no exposure to radiation.

Dr. Joseph Dell'Orfano, an Electrophysiologist (arrhythmia specialist) with Arrhythmia Consultants of Connecticut and a provider for Trinity Health Of New England, performed the first fluoroless atrial fibrillation ablation in Connecticut at Saint Francis Hospital in October of 2017 and has successfully conducted over one hundred more fluoroless procedures since then. He recently performed the first fluoroless atrial fibrillation ablation at Saint Mary's Hospital and expects to continue performing them there regularly. Patients in the Greater Waterbury area will no longer have to travel to Hartford or New Haven for this specialized treatment of atrial fibrillation.

"This is an innovative treatment," says Dr. Jason Ouellette, Chairman of the Department of Medicine at Saint Mary's Hospital. "We're very excited to have Dr. Dell'Orfano at Saint Mary's, to offer it to our patients."

According to the CDC, an estimated 2.7 to 6 million people in the United States have Atrial Fibrillation (AFib). AFib is a common heart rhythm disturbance that causes the heart to beat erratically. It is the leading cause of stroke and can cause symptoms ranging from palpitations to shortness of breath. It is typically treated with medications but can also be treated with an ablation when medications fail.

Ablation of heart rhythm disturbances such as atrial fibrillation is one of the most complicated and demanding cardiac interventional procedures performed. It is a procedure utilizing wires (called catheters), that burn or freeze the area of the heart causing the problem. Doctors need to be very precise in moving catheters inside the heart to avoid causing damage. In order to see the catheters, a type of x-ray machine, called a fluoroscope, is used. The fluoroscope shows a continuous picture of the heart and the catheters using x-ray radiation. However, exposure to x-rays, even a small amount, is harmful to patients and to staff inside the room during the procedure.

Dr. Dell'Orfano is the only Cardiac Electrophysiologist in Connecticut who is performing atrial fibrillation ablations without the use of fluoroscopy. To avoid the use of harmful x-ray exposure, Dr. Dell'Orfano uses other methods such as ultrasound and three-dimensional mapping.

"This is a groundbreaking technique that allows us to perform both routine and complex ablations without using any X-ray. Neither the patient nor the staff is exposed to X-ray radiation during these procedures. This improves patient safety as well as staff safety. Physicians and staff that work in interventional labs are constantly exposed to X-rays. In our lab, this harmful exposure is no longer an issue," said Dr. Dell'Orfano.

Ablation for atrial fibrillation has been shown to be more effective than medications in treating AFib. As the number of cases increase, more patients will be referred for this treatment. "If we can do this procedure without exposing patients to harmful x-rays," says Dr. Dell'Orfano, "then I believe we have made a significant improvement."

"The opportunity to provide state of the art procedures for the patients in our greater Waterbury community has been realized," says Dr. Kevin Kett, Chief of Cardiology at Saint Mary's Hospital. "The new abilities of atrial fibrillation ablation will provide a very important treatment option for our patients. Welcome to the future of Cardiology!"

#### **About Saint Mary's Hospital**

Saint Mary's Hospital is a Catholic, not-for-profit, acute care, community teaching hospital that has served Greater Waterbury since 1909. In 2016, Saint Mary's Hospital became part of Trinity Health Of New England, an integrated health care delivery system that is a member of Trinity Health, Livonia, Michigan, one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation serving communities in 22 states. Licensed for 347 beds, Saint Mary's is designated as a Level II Trauma Center, offers award-winning cardiac and stroke care and houses the region's only pediatric emergency care unit. As the leading provider of surgical services in Greater Waterbury, Saint Mary's was the first to introduce the daVinci® Robotic Surgery System. The hospital's satellites and affiliates extend from Waterbury to Wolcott, Cheshire, Naugatuck, Southbury, Prospect and Watertown. Visit [stmh.org](http://stmh.org) for more information and follow us on Facebook at SaintMarysHospitalCT, Instagram and Twitter at @SaintMarysCT.