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***Lawrence + Memorial Approved for Elective Angioplasty;  
Procedure is Centerpiece of New Heart + Vascular Center***

*New London, CT* ~ Lawrence + Memorial Hospital announced today it has received state approval for elective angioplasty to help patients with coronary artery disease.

Previously, the state Department of Public Health has allowed elective angioplasty only at larger hospitals with on-site, open-heart surgery capabilities.

L+M has been the only hospital in eastern Connecticut performing emergency angioplasty since 2008, in a collaborative program with Yale. The success of that program helped lead the way for a new model of elective angioplasty, making L+M's new program the first of its kind in the state.

"This new approval from the state is important news for patients throughout eastern Connecticut," says Bruce D. Cummings, president and CEO of L+M. "Patients previously had to go out of the area for elective angioplasty. Now, they can get that high-level care for arterial obstructions much closer to home.

"Combined with our outstanding team of experienced cardiologists throughout the community," Cummings continued, "this new service is evidence that L+M is responding to the needs of its patients and continuing its mission of improving the health of the region."

The new procedure, Cummings said, is offered as part of the new Lawrence + Memorial Heart + Vascular Center in affiliation with Yale New Haven Heart and Vascular Center.

Angioplasty is a minimally invasive procedure that enables doctors to open blocked or clogged arteries around the heart without invasive open-heart surgery. It involves the insertion of a thin plastic tube, known as a sheath, into the patient's artery.

Next, a specialized balloon-tipped catheter is guided by X-ray imaging through the sheath to the exact location of the obstruction in the artery. Once in position, the balloon device is inflated, thereby opening the vessel so that blood can once again flow freely through the artery. In the vast majority of cases, a stent is also deployed inside the artery to ensure that the vessel remains open.

When a catheter is inserted into a patient's artery, it requires only a small needle puncture either in the groin area (to access the femoral artery) or at the wrist (to access the radial artery). Elective angioplasty usually requires only a local anesthetic and the patient can typically expect an overnight stay in the hospital for monitoring.

"The sheath used in angioplasty procedures is a tube about the width of a cocktail straw," says Dr. Brian Cambi, a Yale interventional cardiologist who is medical director of L+M's new Heart + Vascular Center in affiliation with the Yale-New Haven Heart and Vascular Center.

"Elective angioplasty is an important tool in treating cardiovascular disease because, in conjunction with medical therapy, this procedure can improve blood flow to the heart muscle, reducing chest discomfort and shortness of breath," Dr. Cambi explains. "In some cases, it can also reduce the chance of the patient developing an ACS (Acute Coronary Syndrome)."

Dr. Cambi added that: "Patients throughout the region should know that these angioplasty procedures are safe and, in conjunction with other medical care, can be very effective in treating coronary artery disease."

Yale officials are also praising the new program at L+M, including Dr. Henry S. Cabin, Clinical Chief for the Section of Cardiovascular Medicine at the Yale School of Medicine, and also the medical director of the YNHH Heart and Vascular Center.

"This is an important step forward in the partnership between Lawrence + Memorial Hospital and the Yale Heart and Vascular Center," Cabin says. "It brings the expertise of the Yale Interventional Faculty to the New London community as it did with the primary angioplasty program."