Clinical Trial Investigates Radio Frequency As Possible Treatment For Chronic High Blood Pressure

/PRNewswire/ -- When multiple medications prove ineffective, patients with high blood pressure are currently left with few treatment options. Sharp Memorial Hospital was the first on the West Coast to participate in Medtronic's SYMPLICITY HTN-3 in March, and is currently the leading trial site in Southern California, to test an experimental medical device that aims to lower high blood pressure by using radio frequency energy to disrupt hyperactive nerves that contribute to the condition.

High blood pressure affects an estimated 40 percent of adults in the United States and can lead to serious heart, kidney and blood vessel damage. Traditional treatments for the condition include oral medications that are meant to be taken on a daily basis for years at a time. These drugs are ineffective in some patients, leaving their high blood pressure dangerously uncontrolled.

In the SYMPLICITY HTN-3 trial, interventional cardiologists thread a small tube in the groin and place a device in the artery leading to the kidney. The device briefly emits radio frequency near renal nerves in an attempt to disrupt hyperactive nerves that may be the root of high blood pressure. Renal nerves communicate information from the kidney to the brain, and vice versa. In people with hypertension, the renal nerves are overactive. Multiple treatments are performed in each artery before the device is removed and, since the procedure is minimally invasive, the patient will typically go home the next day.

"Many of our patients in this trial would not otherwise receive treatment for their high blood pressure," said Raghava Gollapudi, M.D., an interventional cardiologist affiliated with Sharp Memorial. "Medications currently on the market are effective in the great majority of people suffering from hypertension. However, for the small percentage of people who aren't being helped by these pills, SYMPLICITY HTN-3 may be an option."

Principal investigators Dr. Gollapudi and Ron Miller, M.D., affiliated with Sharp Memorial Hospital, are currently evaluating patients for the SYMPLICITY HTN-3 trial. The trial is randomized meaning some patients will receive the investigational treatment while others will receive a placebo. For more information about enrolling in the study, please call (858) 244-6800.

Sharp Memorial Hospital is internationally renowned for its work with heart transplant patients, Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD) procedures and interventional cardiology.

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