First Hybrid Cervical Spine Surgery In The U.S.

(Marketwire) - Dr. Thomas C. Schuler, Chief Executive Officer and Spinal Surgeon at the Virginia Spine Institute, is the first spinal surgeon in the country to perform a hybrid multi-level cervical artificial disc replacement with spinal fusion. This complex procedure is reportedly the first viable option for resolving a combination of degenerative disc disease and herniated discs with normal discs interspersed.

While this multi-faceted procedure has been utilized in Europe for numerous years, Dr. Schuler is at the forefront of using the procedure in the United States. It was performed at Reston Hospital Center. The procedure treats herniated discs, as well as severely degenerated discs, interspersed with normal discs. This hybrid construct procedure included the following, performed through a small incision in the front of the neck:

1. Artificial disc placed at the top of the patient's neck (C3-4).
2. The next level (C4-5) was healthy and left un-operated.
3. The following level (C5-6), which was severely unstable and degenerative, therefore was fused.
4. The lowest level (C6-7), which contained a herniated disc, received an artificial disc.

The artificial discs preserve normal motion and decrease stress on the adjacent healthy discs, reducing damage to nearby discs and joints. Post-surgical care and risks are similar to those that occur with traditional spinal surgery, although recovery has been known to be faster with a reduced amount of post-surgical pain. The unique nature of the Bryan cervical artificial disc is that, to date, it most similarly mimics that of a natural human disc with titanium endplates encasing a polyurethane center and saline cushion.

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