



# ThedaCare®

NEWS FROM THEDACARE®

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## THEDACARE ADDS NEW HEART TREATMENT WITH WATCHMAN DEVICE

### *Offering a Stroke Reduction Option for AFib Patients*

APPLETON, Wis. – ThedaCare has added another new treatment to their Cardiovascular Care program with WATCHMAN. The WATCHMAN Device offers patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (AFib) an alternative to long-term warfarin blood thinner medication.

“We understand the importance of bringing new technology to our patients, keeping them close to home where they can receive the best care available,” said Scott Betzelos, MD, ThedaCare’s Chief Clinical Officer and President of the Clinically Integrated Network. “Using the WATCHMAN implant allows ThedaCare to continue advancing our Cardiovascular Care program.”

An estimated five million Americans are affected by AFib – an irregular heartbeat that feels like a quivering heart. People with AFib may be at greater risk for stroke than those with normal heart rhythms. The WATCHMAN Left Atrial Appendage Closure Device closes off an area of the heart called the left atrial appendage (LAA) to keep harmful blood clots that can form in the LAA from entering the blood stream and potentially causing a stroke. By closing off the LAA, the risk of stroke may be reduced. In a clinical trial, 9 out of 10 people were able to stop taking warfarin just 45 days after getting WATCHMAN. Providers must determine that patients meet specific criteria and are good candidates for the procedure.

“Up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable,” said Abdelkader Almanfi, MD, director of the ThedaCare Structural Heart Program. “WATCHMAN can help reduce the risk of stroke for certain patients. The recovery time is minimal, generally requiring just an overnight stay in the hospital.”

WATCHMAN is available to be used by physicians who have gone through extensive training on the implant procedure.

“We take pride in knowing our cardiovascular team is trained in specialized procedures like WATCHMAN,” said Dr. Almanfi. “By continuing to advance our skills at ThedaCare, it demonstrates our commitment to putting patients and families first, in all we do.”

The WATCHMAN Device has been commercially available since 2009. According to Boston Scientific Corporation, who produces the implant, the WATCHMAN device, is the only FDA-approved implant proven to reduce stroke risk in people with AFib not caused by a heart valve problem. It has been implanted in more than 50,000 patients worldwide.

#### **About ThedaCare**

For more than 110 years, ThedaCare® has been committed to finding a better way to deliver serious and complex healthcare to patients throughout Northeast and Central Wisconsin. The organization serves a community of more than 600,000 residents and employs more than 7,000 healthcare professionals throughout the regions. ThedaCare has seven hospitals located in Appleton, Neenah, Berlin, Waupaca, Shawano, New London and Wild Rose as well as 31 clinics in nine counties. ThedaCare is the first in Wisconsin to be a Mayo Clinic Care



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Network Member, giving our specialists the ability to consult with Mayo Clinic experts on a patient's care. ThedaCare is a non-profit healthcare organization with a level II trauma center, comprehensive cancer treatment, stroke and cardiac programs as well as a foundation dedicated to community service.

For more information, visit [www.thedacare.org](http://www.thedacare.org) or follow ThedaCare on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Media should call Cassandra Wallace, Public Relations Specialist at 920.442.0328 or the ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah switchboard at 920.729.3100 and ask for the marketing person on call.

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