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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NEUROSURGEON IMPLANTS AREA'S FIRST
FDA-APPROVED ARTIFICIAL CERVICAL DISC**

New Technology To End Pain Quicker with Shorter Healing Time

FORT MYERS, FL—October 15—Neurosurgeon Jaime A. Alvarez, M.D. of Southwest Florida Neurosurgical Associates, has successfully implanted a new state-of-the-art stainless steel artificial cervical (neck) disc in a patient, the practice announced today. The successful surgery is the first in Southwest Florida and follows a series of operation trials and extensive study by the board-certified neurosurgeon.

Medtronic Inc. developed the FDA-approved artificial cervical disc. According to Dr. Alvarez, it has the potential to revolutionize cervical disc surgery since it eliminates the need to fuse cervical discs caused by degenerative disc disease and/or cervical injury.

“A patient normally only needs such surgery to eliminate nerve root compression associated with a herniated disc,” he explained. “This injured disc presses against the spinal cord or nerve root, and can cause pain and weakness in the arm and neck.”

In the procedure, the damaged cervical disc is first removed. Called a discectomy, this removal is necessary to make room for the implant. Once the damaged disc is removed, the artificial disc is fitted between the subject cervical discs.

Dr. Alvarez said this procedure has a healing time of about one month versus the two to three months for a traditional cervical disc fusion surgery. Additionally, a patient does not need to wear a protective collar and, unlike cervical fusing, the neck will continue to have a normal range of cervical motion. The new device is expected last the life of the patient.

Patients requiring such an operation normally suffer from severe neck and/or arm pain. “Not every patient is a candidate for this new technique,” Dr. Alvarez cautioned. “The patient must be in overall good health and not have advanced degenerative disc disease in order to accommodate the implant itself.”

Also, only one cervical disc can be replaced using this procedure at this time, although Dr. Alvarez believes it will be possible in the future to implant more than one at a time. Patients not able to have the implant still are able to achieve pain relief through cervical fusion, he stressed.

Now working with a third generation design that's been 30 years in development, Dr. Alvarez explained that the new cervical disc implant is continually undergoing testing to improve its function.

“I believe this new disc implant technology will become the standard for cervical disc surgery,” he said. “Preliminary data and follow-up studies indicate this is a very successful device with few complications.”

The other five neurosurgeons at Southwest Florida Neurosurgical Associates, all of whom are board-certified, are expected to begin offering this specialized surgery soon.

Presently, the multi-specialty medical practice focuses on the advanced treatment of arm, leg and back pain caused by spinal problems. They are the only medical practice in Southwest Florida that offers the full range of both non-surgical and surgical treatment options within their office locations in Fort Myers and Cape Coral to patients seeking pain relief.

For more information on the new artificial cervical disc implantation surgery, please call Southwest Florida Neurosurgical Associates at (239) 432-0774 or go to their website at www.swfna.com. The practice accepts most insurance plans and is a Medicare participant.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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