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GE debuts molecular imaging business segment at SNM

By AMANDA PEDERSEN

Medical Device Daily Staff Writer

What better way to unveil a new molecular imaging business than in an exhibit hall packed with people whose job is dedicated to improving healthcare by advancing molecular imaging and therapy? **GE Healthcare** (Waukesha, Wisconsin) is debuting its new molecular imaging business this week at the 56th annual meeting of the **Society of Nuclear Medicine** (SNM; Reston, Virginia) in Toronto. By doing so, the company says it is presenting a new vision for molecular imaging, "Understanding disease. From the beginning."

In the exhibit hall, GE is featuring SPECT/CT, PET/CT, radiopharmacy and pre-clinical technologies that it says address some of the biggest issues facing healthcare providers. These issues include inaccuracy caused by motion in PET/CT imaging, the need for better visualization

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Medical isotope shortage may be major diagnostic setback

By OMAR FORD

Medical Device Daily Staff Writer

The continued shortage of medical isotopes could bring back more invasive and expensive imaging techniques in the diagnosis of patients, according to speakers during a press conference held by the **Society of Nuclear Medicine** (Reston, Virginia) during its annual meeting yesterday.

The press conference comes on the heels of Canada recently shutting down its Chalk River Reactor, which supplies almost a third of the world's isotope supplies.

Atomic Energy of Canada (AEC; Mississauga, Canada) said the reason for the closure is because a leak is located "at the base of the reactor vessel in a location where there is corrosion on the outside wall," and while the rate of leakage "remains stable" at about 5 kilograms an hour, the plant's management said it is examining its options for

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Obama advocates for a public option, 'open' to a mandate

By MARK McCARTY

Medical Device Daily Washington Editor

President Barack Obama's Monday address to the **American Medical Association** (Chicago) was highly anticipated, but did not deliver much in the way of news. However, Obama used the occasion to reinforce his message that "reform is not a luxury, it is a necessity." He also stated that he favors a public option and that he is "open" to the idea of mandatory enrollment, albeit with exceptions provided for individuals and businesses that cannot afford to enroll or provide coverage for employees.

Regarding a public option for healthcare insurance, Obama said that such a plan could be set up as part of a healthcare insurance exchange (HIE) that "allows you to one-stop shop for healthcare plans." Every plan will offer "an affordable basic package," as well as other higher-coverage plans, he said. "One of these options needs to be a public option," he said of the HIE, adding that the public option is necessary to "force waste out of the system and

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Weight management program is based on genetic markers

By KATHLEEN KITE-POWELL

Medical Device Daily Staff Writer

Last week, **Interleukin Genetics** (Waltham, Massachusetts) launched a new all-encompassing brand for its personal genetic tests under the trademark Inherent Health. Under this umbrella resides a weight reduction program based on a first-of-its-kind test, the new Weight Management Genetic Test. The test identifies genetically-based tendencies for the body's metabolic behavior that affect weight gain.

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A little something Extra

You asked for it . . . you got it. Tacked onto the end of your regular issue today are two pages of *MDD's Cardio Extra*, which we have tagged "Additional Developments in One of Med-Tech's Key Sectors." This is now a regular weekly feature of the publication as part of increasing *MDD's* value to you.

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*Washington roundup***CDC issues first guidelines governing genetic testing**By **DONNA YOUNG****Medical Device Daily Washington Writer**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; Atlanta) has issued the first federal government recommendations to foster accuracy and appropriate use of DNA-based genetic tests.

The guidance document, titled "Good Laboratory Practices for Molecular Genetic Testing for Heritable Diseases and Conditions," which is posted on the CDC's website, addresses considerations for clinical and laboratory professionals that are important for achieving patient benefits and avoiding medical mistakes when molecular genetic tests are used, such as ensuring proper test method selection and test performance and appropriate test result reporting, interpretation and use.

The guidance also covers factors to consider before introducing new tests and what qualifications laboratory personnel should have to perform testing.

Molecular genetic testing is one of the most rapidly growing areas of laboratory testing in the U.S., with the number of genetic diseases and conditions for which tests are available tripling from 423 in the past eight years to more than 1,300, officials said.

The CDC noted that the growth of direct-to-consumer testing, which is permitted in 37 states and often done without oversight, has "raised additional concern about the potential misuse of genetic tests."

DNA-based genetic tests are used to help make decisions about patient care, such as whether patients have or may be at risk for a genetic disease such as cystic fibrosis or whether they may be prone to chronic diseases including cancer, diabetes and blood clotting disorders.

"Getting an accurate diagnosis influences a patient's course of treatment and how they deal with a disease or

**Coming Wednesday
in *MDD Perspectives*****A new regulatory environment
gears up to address nanomaterials**

Nanotoxicology expert David W. Hobson suggests that industry must step up to gather and assess data on the safety of nanomaterials before government alone shapes a new regulatory model.

Read about it in tomorrow's edition of *MDD Perspectives*, an op-ed e-zine that provides fresh commentary and opinions on issues that you can't find anywhere else. And best of all, it's free. If you don't already subscribe to this complimentary e-zine, go to medicaldevicedaily.com to sign up.

disease threat," the CDC said. "Implementation of the genetic testing guidance can improve accurate diagnoses and ultimately ensure that patients and their doctors can make the best decisions for their health."

NCI awards first bridge awards

The **National Cancer Institute's** (NCI) Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) awarded the first two Phase II Bridge Awards, a new funding opportunity intended to aid promising cancer therapies and imaging technologies.

Lpath Therapeutics (San Diego), which focuses on lipidomics-based therapeutics, and **OptoSonics** (Oriental, North Carolina), which develops molecular imaging instrumentation used in the fields of molecular biology, oncology, drug discovery, diagnostics, and therapeutic medicine, received the first two awards.

The Bridge Awards program, first announced last year, *See Washington, Page 3*

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Financings roundup

Cappella completes \$17.3M fundraising to finance new stent

A Medical Device Daily Staff Report

Cappella (Wilmington, Delaware/Galway, Ireland) reported that it has completed a \$17.3 million series C investment, led by new investors Fountain Healthcare Partners and Mitsui & Co. Venture Partners (MCVP). Enterprise Ireland also participated in this round alongside Cappella's existing investors, Polytechnos Partners and ACT Venture Capital.

Proceeds will be used to finance the launch of Cappella's Sideguard Sidebranch stent for the treatment of bifurcated vascular disease in Europe and to advance key R&D programs in Galway on additional applications of Cappella's technology in complex coronary artery disease.

CEO Art Rosenthal said, "This funding will allow us to expand our pipeline, to supplement on-going clinical studies and to successfully launch our first product, the Sideguard Sidebranch stent. We believe our proprietary products will treat many types of bifurcation disease, including left main bifurcation disease. In 2008, this was a \$1 billion worldwide market and it is growing annually."

Ena Prosser, of Fountain Healthcare Partners, said, "We are delighted to invest in Cappella at a very strategic point in the company's development. From our perspective, Cappella have a differentiated product offering for the treatment of coronary heart disease. Cappella's impressive management team and top-class scientific advisory board will drive rapid adoption of the Sideguard Sidebranch stent in Europe and its successful clinical development in the U.S."

In other financing news:

- **Anulex Technologies** (Minneapolis) closed its fourth round of private equity financing, totaling roughly \$10.2 million. Investors leading the round include Affinity Capital, Delphi Ventures, MB Venture Partners, New Enterprise Associates, SightLine Partners and Split Rock Partners.

President/CEO Rich Lunsford said, "This financing will give us the ability to complete the enrollment and follow-up phases of our . . . Xclose post-market clinical study with the goal of providing further evidence to support the benefits of preservation and repair of the anulus. It will also provide additional investment for our U.S. commercialization efforts and further support the company's innovative research and development strategy."

Anulex develops soft-tissue repair products with primary interests in treatments for the soft tissues of the spine.

- **Pulmo BioTech** (New York) said that it has entered into an exclusive agreement with Moody Capital Solutions to secure up to \$7.5 million in funding to enable the company to complete Phase II/III approvals for its pulmonary hypertension diagnostic product candidate PulmoBind.

- **Quest Diagnostics** (Madison, New Jersey) reported

the pricing determination for its previously noted cash tender offer to purchase up to \$200 million total aggregate principal amount of its 5.125% senior notes due 2010 and 7.50% senior notes due 2011.

Quest will pay holders who tendered and did not withdraw their notes at or prior to 5 p.m., EDT on June 2 the total tender offer consideration of \$1,021.49 for each \$1,000 principal amount of its 5.125% senior notes due 2010 accepted for purchase and \$1,050.44 for each \$1,000 principal amount of its 7.50% senior notes due 2011 accepted for purchase, plus, in each case, accrued and unpaid interest up to, but not including, the settlement date. ■

Washington

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more than triples the amount of monies available through the NCI SBIR program.

The Phase II Bridge Awards are designed to help early stage biomedical companies bridge the funding gap known as the "valley of death," which exists between the end of a Phase II SBIR award and the commercialization of the technology.

The Bridge program provides up to \$3 million in additional NCI SBIR funding, following a Phase II SBIR award, to help accelerate the commercialization of new products and technologies. By sharing in the risk on these projects, the NCI also is incentivizing third-party investors to invest in these projects much earlier than they typically would. ■

Will this CME program violate off-label promotion law?

There's a thin line between legitimate continuing medical education (CME) and illegal off-label promotion of a drug or device. Even with proper credentials, sales and marketing staff can place their companies on the wrong side of the law.

In a new *BioWorld Today* and *Medical Device Daily* audio conference, attorney Elizabeth Gobeil and former federal prosecutor Holly Pierson will detail the rules of CME and promotion. They'll examine what constitutes legitimate education, and identify the red flags that investigators are looking for.

"CME and Off-Label Promotion: Find and Fix Noncompliance Before the Feds Do" is just \$325 per listening site. Scheduled for June 30th, from 1-2:30 p.m., it includes presentation handouts and a Q&A session with the speakers. A conference CD (MP3 format) is also available. Please call 800-688-2421 or 404-262-5474 and mention conference code T09566.

*Report from Europe***French firm's Slide System aids in movement of patients****A Medical Device Daily Staff Report**

The Slide Medical System from **Direct Medical** (Hendaye, France) allows emergency or medical staff to easily slide a patient from an ambulance stretcher onto a bed, an X-ray table and/or onto an operating table.

This light and sturdy two-panel system slides under the patient, removing stress from both patient and caregiver.

The company's device is made of two separate polycarbonate L-shaped panels equipped with a simple sliding runner and a handle that Slide Medical said is easy to grip. Its special coating prevents skin friction or burn effect.

In addition to facilitating the smooth and swift transfer of a patient from a stretcher to a bed, it also can facilitate a patient's bathing activity, changing bedding, and avoids pressure on any existing bed sores.

In use, one panel is gently placed under the patient's shoulder and the other is slipped under his buttocks. Holding both grab handles and with one swift gesture, the nurse then horizontally pulls and places the patient onto the other support, without any pressure on the nurse's back.

The Slide System can either be thermosterilized or immersed in a disinfecting solution, thus maintaining a *Staphylococcus*-free environment for the patient. It is quick to assemble, the company said.

Direct Medical Export Manager Michel Bertièrè said the company is seeking a U.S. distributor for the Slide Medical System.

New financing assistance by Elekta

Elekta (Stockholm, Sweden) said it has entered a cooperative agreement with SEK, the Swedish Export Credit Corporation. The agreement entails customer financing and applies globally with the exception of North America, where Elekta already has an established partner for customer financing.

The company said the agreement with SEK Customer Financing strengthens and expands its opportunities for offering competitive solutions for customer financing. Within the framework of the agreement, SEK will offer care providers around the world financing in the form of installment credit and leasing of Elekta's clinical systems, and Elekta will be able to offer customers financing with limited impact on its own balance sheet.

"Since the credit crisis began, we have seen increased demand for alternative financing solutions. I am [pleased] that we are now able to offer our customers a broad range of attractive solutions in this area," says Elekta CFO Hakan Bergström.

"We are pleased to be entrusted with assisting Elekta with its customer financing platform. This agreement is completely in line with our ambition to increase the competitiveness of Swedish export companies in the global market," said Peter Yngwe, president of SEK.

Elekta is a company pioneering innovations for treating cancer and brain disorders. The company develops tools and treatment planning systems for radiation therapy and radiosurgery, as well as workflow enhancing software systems across the spectrum of cancer care.

Elekta solutions in oncology and neurosurgery are used in more than 5,000 hospitals globally. The company has some 2,500 employees worldwide.

UK court upholds Edwards vs. Cook

Global heart valve company **Edwards Lifesciences** (Irvine, California) said that the UK High Court of Justice has determined that **Cook's** (Bloomington, Indiana) UK transcatheter valve patent is invalid and not infringed by the Edwards Sapien transcatheter valve.

"We are gratified that the UK court has found Cook's patent invalid and has agreed with a German court decision that Edwards does not infringe the Cook patent," said Larry Wood, Edwards' corporate vice president, transcatheter valve replacement. "We remain committed to protecting our comprehensive intellectual property in transcatheter heart valves, which represents one important element of our broader leadership strategy."

As previously reported, the District Court of Düsseldorf, Germany, determined in March that Edwards does not infringe Cook's German patent. Edwards has a separate lawsuit claiming invalidity of Cook's German transcatheter valve patent, which is expected to be heard in Munich next year.

Edwards' heart valve therapies, along with its critical care and vascular technologies, are sold in about 100 countries. ■

**M E D - T E C H N E W S
A N D N O T E S**

Perceptive Informatics launches RECIST web site

Perceptive Informatics (Boston) reported the launch of a web site designed to help investigators apply the new 1.1 version of RECIST (Response Evaluation Criteria In Solid Tumors) in medical imaging-based oncology trials. Perceptive Informatics, which participated in the RECIST Working Group, has incorporated into its RECIST web site at www.recist.com, a comparison between RECIST 1.0 and 1.1, as well as instructions on how to effectively use the new criteria. Perceptive Informatics, a subsidiary of Parexel, is an eClinical solutions provider.

Agreements/contracts**Steris, Siemens collaborating on new hybrid surgical suites****A Medical Device Daily Staff Report**

Steris (Mentor, Ohio) and **Siemens Medical Solutions USA** (Malvern, Pennsylvania) have agreed to collaborate to offer optimized vascular, cardiovascular and neurosurgical hybrid surgical suites. The collaboration was reported at the **Society of Vascular Surgery** (Chicago) annual meeting in Denver.

Siemens said it would provide advanced information and interventional technologies, while Steris will supply custom-designed HD 360 Suites featuring LED surgical lighting and visualization systems as well as OR integration and equipment management solutions. Steris will also provide room design and project management services using its three-dimensional Room Builder software.

The hybrid suites that result from Steris and Siemens' joint efforts will enable surgical and diagnostic teams to carry out a vast range of image-guided cardiovascular, vascular, and neurosurgical interventional procedures as well as open surgeries, the companies said.

"Our two companies share a commitment to providing seamless solutions to our customers as they advance their level of care," said Bill O'Riordan, VP/GM of Steris Surgical Solutions. "Working together, we can help facilities meet growing procedural demands and provide the technology that will integrate capabilities for new interventional procedures, minimally invasive surgeries and open procedures, all in the same space. This collaboration will also be able to help healthcare providers embrace future surgical innovation with ease."

"Our new collaboration with Steris complements Siemens' already extensive healthcare technology portfolio, which uniquely helps customers integrate the planning, building, and implementation of technologies within the OR," said Claus Grill, VP of cardiac, interventional/neuro, and X-ray systems at Siemens Healthcare. "As the needs of today's surgical suite expand to accommodate both minimally invasive techniques and complex open surgical procedures within the same environment, state-of-the-art image-guidance technologies, such as our Artis zee family, including the first-to-market Artis zeego, are being incorporated into surgical workflow to improve clinical, operational, and financial efficiency."

According to the companies, the collaboration will deliver hybrid operating room solutions that enable healthcare facilities to improve workflow and streamline room planning and installation. Clinical staff will benefit from the resulting tailored and intuitive environment that has the potential to increase the efficiency and optimize the outcomes of these procedures. Most importantly, these new rooms offer hospitals the opportunity to better address room utilization challenges and make the most of their cap-

ital investments, Siemens and Steris said.

In other agreements/contracts news:

- **Cook Medical** (Bloomington, Indiana) and **LMA Urology** (Gland, Switzerland) have entered into a partnership that the companies say can significantly improve the remedies available for stone disease management. The companies note that an estimated 12% of the population are expected to suffer from stone disease at some point in their lives and studies predict that environmental factors will only force that number to grow in many areas of the U.S.

Cook will market and distribute LMA's StoneBreaker, a portable pneumatic, endoscopic lithotripter for stone fragmentation. According to the company, StoneBreaker is a powerful, easy-to manage and cost-effective lithotripter, and will be marketed in conjunction with Cook's own portfolio of stone management technologies and devices. Together, they provide urologists across the globe with a highly effective, end-to-end solution for treating kidney, ureteral and bladder stones, reducing procedure times and improving overall patient care, the companies said.

LMA says its StoneBreaker device is highly effective in the treatment of urinary stone disease. The StoneBreaker's unique, compact, ergonomic design makes it easier to manage than comparable lithotripters, reducing the procedure time for fragmentation and removal of stones, the company said. Additionally, there is minimal probe movement during the procedure allowing for safer stone fragmentation and reduced stone migration. Powered by a cartridge of high-pressure carbon dioxide gas, the StoneBreaker is designed to deliver a higher probe-tip velocity at impact to successfully break stones in one procedure, thus eliminating the need for additional costly procedure time and patient discomfort, the company said.

- **Premier Purchasing Partners** (San Diego) reported that new agreements for OR accessory products have been awarded to **DeRoyal Industries** (Powell, Tennessee), **Medline Industries** (Mundelein, Illinois), **Sandel Medical Industries** (Chatsworth, California), **Tyco Covidien** (Mansfield, Massachusetts), and **Xodus Medical** (New Kingsington, Pennsylvania).

Effective Aug. 1, the agreements are available to acute-care and continuum-of-care members of the Premier healthcare alliance. ■

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*Court report***Palomar's patents for hair removal technology confirmed****A Medical Device Daily Staff Report**

Palomar Medical Technologies (Burlington, Massachusetts), a developer of light-based systems for cosmetic treatments, reported that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has confirmed the validity of 56 claims in the re-examination of U.S. patent No. 5,735,844 (the '844 patent), titled "Hair Removal Using Optical Pulses."

Rejecting claims and arguments from **Candela** (Wayland, Massachusetts) and another company to the contrary, the USPTO confirmed that claims 1-3, 6-8, 11, 17-20, 27, 28, 30, 32 of the '844 patent are valid and patentable. As part of the re-examination process, Palomar added 26 new claims (33-59) to the '844 patent, and the USPTO also confirmed these new claims as valid and patentable. The USPTO rejected only independent claim 12 and related dependent claims 13-14 as unpatentable.

Palomar has canceled these claims 12-14 from the '844 patent in order to expedite the re-examination proceeding. Claims 4, 5, 9, 10, 15, 16, 21-26, 29 and 31 are not under re-examination. Consequently, all currently pending claims are valid.

Palomar and **Massachusetts General Hospital** (Boston) are suing Candela for willful infringement of the '844 patent in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. On Nov. 17, 2008, the lawsuit was stayed by the court pending the outcome of the re-examination proceeding of the '844 patent and the re-examination proceeding of U.S. patent No. 5,595,568 (the '568 patent). Palomar will seek a re-start of the lawsuit given the allowance of all currently pending claims in the '844 patent.

The re-examination of the '568 patent is ongoing and no office action has yet been issued.

This light-based hair removal patent family has already been licensed to 10 competitors and is also the subject of a patent infringement lawsuit against **Syneron** (Irvine, California).

Palomar CEO Joseph Caruso said, "We are very pleased with the office action issued by the U.S. Patent Office, as we have always believed in the strength of this patent family. We are especially pleased with the speed with which this re-examination was handled. Defendants often request re-examination purely to cause long delays of patent infringement lawsuits. We look forward to re-starting the patent infringement lawsuit against Candela as quickly as possible.

"Palomar was the first company to receive FDA clearance and bring a high powered light-based hair removal system to market," he said. "Palomar was later the first company to receive FDA clearance for permanent hair reduction and the first company to receive over-the-counter clearance from the FDA for a hair removal device."

Caruso added, "After establishing light-based hair

removal as a viable treatment option, many competitors began to use our technology. Several properly took licenses, while others opted not to at their own risk."

He said, "Unauthorized taking of technology is what the patent system is designed to prevent. We intend to continue our aggressive patent enforcement strategy both to protect our own investment in research and market development as well as the investment of our competitor licensees." ■

M E D - T E C H N E W S A N D N O T E S
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Northstar Neuroscience to delist from Nasdaq

Northstar Neuroscience (Seattle) said that it has provided written notice to the Nasdaq Stock Market of its intention to voluntarily delist its common stock from the Nasdaq Global Market. Northstar expects that trading in its common stock will be permanently suspended by Nasdaq effective at the open of trading on June 22, with official delisting of the common stock effective 10 days thereafter, on July 2, at which time Northstar's transfer agent will close the stock transfer records and discontinue recording transfers of the common stock.

Northstar's actions to delist its common stock from Nasdaq and file the Articles of Dissolution are pursuant to the plan of complete liquidation and dissolution approved by Northstar's shareholders on May 14.

VUNS: varicose vein treatments reach 500,000

VNUS Medical Technologies (San Jose, California), a maker of devices for the minimally invasive treatment of venous reflux disease, the underlying cause of varicose veins, said that it estimates the number of patients treated with the VNUS Closure radio frequency vein ablation system has surpassed 500,000 worldwide.

"Achieving the physician, patient and insurer acceptance that has led to 500,000 patients treated with our VNUS Closure procedure is a tremendous milestone both for our company and for the field of minimally invasive vein treatment," said Brian Farley, VNUS' first employee in 1995 and president/CEO. "Although this accomplishment is notable, we expect that in the future our Closure products will ultimately help millions of patients suffering from venous reflux. We also believe that our success emanates from a strong commitment to product quality supported by clinical and comparative effectiveness trials of our products."

He added, "The results of these trials have proven to the medical and payor community that the VNUS Closure catheter offers superior clinical benefits to patients compared to alternative therapies. We believe our physician customers and employees gain a deep sense of satisfaction from providing such high quality medical care and products to our most important constituents – the patients treated with VNUS Closure products."

GE

Continued from Page 1

tion of disease and efficient workflow in SPECT/CT, faster throughput for pre-clinical imaging and more consistent and compliant imaging agent production in radiopharmaceuticals.

"Looking at the future of healthcare, we understood the need to dedicate an entire business segment to molecular imaging," said Terri Bresenham, newly appointed VP of GE Healthcare's molecular imaging business. "We are in the unique position of providing a complete portfolio of clinically-relevant offerings, from imaging agents to imaging systems. At GE, we have the capability to provide single touch-point solutions to our global customers."

As the Discovery PET/CT 600 series continues to expand, GE introduced the Discovery PET/CT 690 – a molecular imaging tool designed to go beyond the needs of the clinical practice and provide the necessary tools and technologies to explore the future of PET/CT imaging.

From a noisy SNM exhibit hall yesterday, Lynn Bender, global marketing leader for the PET/CT business at GE, told *Medical Device Daily* that the Discovery PET/CT 690 has been well-received at the meeting so far.

"We are getting a tremendous amount of traffic at our booth, people are excited and asking to see images," Bender said. She said GE has clinical images to show attendees that demonstrate the image quality of the new PET/CT system and also that the injected dose is lower and exam times are shorter.

With specialized detector configuration designed for sensitivity, event throughput and efficiency, researchers and clinicians have the necessary speed in workflow, protocol flexibility and unique timing resolution technology to help forge new frontiers in clinical techniques, drug discovery and motion management, according to GE.

All of the Discovery PET/CT 600 Series products incorporate MotionFree imaging technologies into the clinical workflow, the company noted. Bender said the system allows clinicians and researchers to align PET and CT gated images to compensate for movement in all regions of the body, most importantly those regions subject to respiration motion. GE's MotionFree imaging technology on the Discovery PET/CT 690 is integrated with VUE Point FX, an advanced high-definition reconstruction technique incorporating the element of time. Combined, these technologies have the potential to improve small lesion detection, image quality, and better therapy response monitoring, according to the company.

Bender said that the MotionFree imaging technology is "extremely important for accuracy" and for providing a "good view of what's going on here in the body."

"Motion is one of the most clinically difficult issues when you do PET imaging," Bender said, noting that the exam can take anywhere between 15 minutes to 30 min-

utes. "Obviously patients are breathing, which is a good thing, but their organs move and tumors move during that time period."

Bender said the other key parameter in PET imaging is sensitivity and that with the Discovery PET/CT 690 GE has the highest sensitivity in the industry. "That also helps us with potential lower dose and lower scan times," she said.

Workflow is also an important consideration in PET imaging, Bender noted. As PET centers and institutions build their patient volume, it's important that the technologists be able to go between the PET and CT easily, she said.

"With the Discovery PET/CT family of products, we bring flexibility to the market," said Jim Mitchell, general manager of GE Healthcare's PET business. "We deliver platforms designed to meet the immediate needs of clinicians, while providing researchers with tools to explore the future of molecular imaging."

GE also showcased its Alcyone Technology, a nuclear cardiology platform combining cadmium zinc telluride (CZT) detectors, focused pin-hole collimation, 3-D reconstruction, and stationary data acquisition, to improve workflow, dose management, and overall image quality. According to the company, Alcyone's focused multi-pin-hole collimation has been strategically positioned to view cardiac anatomy and pathology with greater clarity and speed, resulting in scan times as short as three minutes. Unlike conventional nuclear imaging, all views are acquired simultaneously during a fully stationary SPECT acquisition, eliminating equipment movement during the scan and reducing the risk of motion artifacts, GE said. Available in SPECT (Discovery NM 530c) and SPECT/CT (Discovery NM/CT 570c) configurations, Alcyone will take a department and its workflow to "new heights," the company said.

The Discovery NM/CT 570c SPECT/CT system featuring Alcyone has the ability to perform a complete cardiac acquisition in less than five minutes including myocardial perfusion imaging (MPI), computed tomographic angiography (CTA), and calcium scoring (CaSC), according to GE. The system also improves dose management, and enables more convenient patient scheduling in comparison to separate, conventional SPECT and CT exams, the company said.

"We are focused on advancing the field of molecular imaging to help all clinicians see disease earlier than ever before, specifically in the areas of neurodegenerative diseases, cardiology, and oncology," said Will Downie, molecular imaging leader for GE Healthcare's Medical Diagnostics business. "We are proud to be a leading voice emphasizing the value of molecular imaging and its impact on early diagnosis and treatment."

GE recently launched a company-wide health initiative dubbed "Healthymagination," in line with the renowned, environmentally conscious, Ecomagination program.

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Isotope

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plugging the leak site.

The situation is dire, according to the society, and remains as “one of the most significant medical crises” in recent history.

Canada is one of five nations, including — France, Belgium, the Netherlands and South Africa — that directly supplies the isotope known as molybdenum-99 the most commonly used medical isotope. The chemical decays within 67 hours of production and is incredibly hard to stockpile.

Canadian officials have said that repairs to the reactor could take up to three months, if the reactor is salvageable at all. In addition, the Canadian government has made it plain that it would permanently close down the reactor in 2016.

On top of that, the Dutch reactor is scheduled to be closed for at least four weeks for scheduled maintenance work.

“One of the anxieties we have is that we don’t know when this reactor is going to come back online,” said SNM President Robert Atcher of the Chalk River reactor.

Most of the reactors were built with 40-years of use in mind. Unfortunately, according to Atcher, nearly all are at least 40.

“Having the Chalk River site closing is a double whammy . . . since it has excess capacity to serve as a backup when one of the other sites [is] down,” Atcher said.

Already, hospitals and patients are beginning to feel the affects of its absence.

An e-mail survey conducted by the SNM shows that 91% of the 375 participants of the poll said they had been directly impacted by the shortage of the isotope. Nearly 60% said that procedures had to be postponed, with another 31% saying that screenings had to be canceled.

“There have been no actual deaths yet, but tests have been delayed and so has treatment,” said Michael Graham, president-elect of SNM. “The alternative is that we’re going to have to look toward more invasive [diagnostics] tests.”

Positron emission tomography (PET) scans will also be utilized more. The problem is that some of these tests aren’t covered by Medicare and could put an undue expense and burden on the patient.

“The danger is that you use imaging techniques that are less sensitive and less accurate but are more costly and more invasive,” Atcher said.

The supply of molybdenum-99 has appeared to be shaky for the past two years. AEC had shut down the reactor in 2007 due to leak problems (*Medical Device Daily*, Dec. 20, 2007), which was followed last year by a temporary shutdown of a reactor in the Netherlands. The **Nuclear Research and Consultancy Group** (NRG; Petten, the Netherlands), reported the shutdown of its High Flux Reactor because of the periodic presence of “a very small trace of gas bubbles” detected in the reactor’s primary cooling

system.

Covidien (Mansfield, Massachusetts), which has relied heavily on the Netherlands site for isotopes, hasn’t been directly affected by the Ontario site’s closing. But the company said that it was bracing for impact and in a letter to the FDA’s web site said that “there will be challenges meeting full market need.”

Some hospitals have already started to ration out the use of isotopes.

According to Peter Conti, MD, a prolonged shortage could even threaten clinical trials for cancer drugs because patients might not be able to obtain scans on schedule, which could force them out. He added that physicians are now only doing some of the most urgent tests.

The industry is on the brink of taking a step backwards instead of a step forward. But without a solution or more isotope sites put into place, then innovation in the diagnostics field could come to a screeching halt.

“We need to have a stable supply of isotopes for the broad spectrum . . . if we’re going to move the diagnostics and molecular field forward,” Conti said. ■

Grants roundup

Mayo Clinic gets \$48M to study heart rhythms

A Medical Device Daily Staff Report

The **Mayo Clinic** (Rochester, Minnesota) has received grants worth \$48 million to study cardiac arrhythmia.

The grants come from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), and from companies including **St. Jude Medical** (St. Paul, Minnesota). The study will include 3,000 patients in 140 medical centers around the world. Mayo will lead the study.

The study will try to determine whether catheter ablation, where a tube is inserted into the veins that lead to the heart to treat abnormal heartbeats, works better than drug therapy.

The CABANA (Catheter Ablation Versus Anti-arrhythmic Drug Therapy for Atrial Fibrillation) pivotal trial will last up to six years and will study the treatment of atrial fibrillation in a total of 3,000 patients and 140 centers from around the world. It will randomize patients over three years, with half undergoing catheter ablation and half receiving rate control or rhythm control drug therapy.

Funding for the trial includes \$18 million from the NHLBI, \$20 million from St. Jude Medical, and \$10 million from **Biosense Webster** (Diamond Bar, California), a **Johnson & Johnson** (New Brunswick, New Jersey) company.

The results from the CABANA trial will add to the growing body of clinical evidence comparing catheter ablation to drug therapy for AFib and is designed to go beyond preceding trials, which did not have the ability to examine long term risks of mortality and stroke. ■

*Deals roundup***DJO sells Empi's rehab business unit to Patterson****A Medical Device Daily Staff Report**

DJO (San Diego), a global provider of medical device solutions for musculoskeletal health, vascular health and pain management, reported the sale of the rehabilitation equipment and supply catalog business of its **Empi** (St. Paul, Minnesota) business unit, Empi Therapy Solutions (ETS; St. Paul, Minnesota), formerly known as Rehab Medical Equipment, or RME, to **Patterson Medical**, a division of **Patterson Companies** (also St. Paul). ETS generated annual sales of about \$32 million in 2008.

The financial terms of the transaction, which was completed on June 12, were not disclosed.

A substantial portion of the ETS business consists of the resale of non-DJO branded rehabilitation equipment and supplies.

"Empi's market-leading franchises in electrotherapy, home traction, and iontophoresis (transdermal drug delivery), remain core components of DJO's business going forward and we will continue to serve our customers with these important Empi products," said Les Cross, president/CEO of DJO. "With the sale of the non-core ETS business, Empi can now devote its full resources on its higher-margin, industry-leading brands and products."

Patterson Companies serves the dental, companion-pet

veterinarian and rehabilitation supply markets.

In other dealmaking news, **Invio Biomedical** (San Diego), a company engaged in the development of a new generation of vaccines, called DNA vaccines, reported that it has granted an option to a commercial license to develop intravascular catheters using its proprietary electroporation technology to **Cardigant Medical** (Long Beach, California).

Cardigant said it intends to develop catheters utilizing Invio's electroporation technology in exchange for an option fee and, upon exercise of the option, royalties on product sales. Invio preclinical and interim clinical data have shown the capability of the company's electroporation technology to dramatically enhance cellular uptake of drugs and genes, and, in the case of genes, levels of gene expression. These characteristics may enhance the utility of drug or gene-based therapeutics for treating a variety of vascular conditions, including vulnerable plaques and others requiring revascularization.

"We strongly believe in the potential of this technology to enhance the therapeutic options available for treating the many components of vascular disease," said Jerett Creed, President of Cardigant. "We view this technology as an enabling component that we hope will translate into improved clinical outcomes for patients worldwide."

Cardigant is an early-stage company focused on novel designs for enhanced delivery of therapeutic agents used to treat vascular disease. ■

Obama

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keep the insurance companies honest."

Obama attempted to reassure physicians that the burden for making a public option work would not fall unduly on the shoulders of doctors. He said doctors are worried that today's Medicare rates "will be applied broadly, which means cost savings are coming off your backs," but said that policymakers "will ensure that you are reimbursed in a thoughtful way that's tied to patient outcomes" rather than "the immediate state of the federal budget in a given year."

"The public option is not your enemy, it is your friend," Obama continued, adding that he did not see the legitimacy of concerns "that a public option is somehow a Trojan horse for a single payer system." He said he is of the view that single-payer systems work for some nations, but he said he does not favor such an approach for the U.S. "What a public option will help do is put affordable coverage in reach for millions of Americans," and one of the ways to make that happen is to provide "assistance for families that need it," he said.

Obama acknowledged that reform will cost dearly in the next couple of years, but promised things will even out

in the long haul. "Even if we accept all the economic reasons for providing coverage for all Americans, there is no denying that expanding coverage will come at a cost, at least in the short run." Still, he promised it will not add to long-term deficits. Reform, he said, "must be and will be budget neutral in the next decade."

"Making healthcare affordable for all Americans will cost on the order of \$1 trillion over the next decade," Obama acknowledged, but argued that failing to act "will cost us trillions of dollars more in lost economic growth." One of the cost solutions, he said, is that the federal government "should end overpayments to Medicare Advantage" plans, which he said government pays "much more than we pay for traditional insurance plans. We need to introduce competitive bidding" to AMA plans. "That alone will save \$177 billion over the next decade."

Obama acknowledged the role of defensive medicine where costs are concerned, but offered physicians little hope of seeing any movement toward tort reform. "I understand some doctors may feel the need to order more tests in order not to feel legally vulnerable," he said, but nonetheless stated, "I'm not advocating caps on malpractice awards," which he said "can be unfair for people

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Weight

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Dr. Louis Perusse of **Laval University** in Quebec, author of the Obesity Gene Map, collaborated with Interleukin Genetics to develop this test. The genes used in the test were selected based on clinical data that support their impact on body weight.

The test's unique combination of genetic markers addresses variations in metabolism, carbohydrate absorption, fat absorption and storage. Perusse said, "This test and the related tools will be an important aid for individuals to help them manage their weight based on genetic influences."

Many other genetics and nutrition experts collaborated, providing top-notch advice. The company says its affordable, simple swab test will be ordered online from the Inherent Health site. Once tested, an individual will receive an interpretation of results and personalized guidance on key action items that can help control body weight.

That advice covers diet, nutrition and exercise options that can have the highest impact on that particular subject's weight loss. It also should allow the person to keep weight off. There will also be access to additional web-based weight management tools, for the input of ongoing nutritional, exercise, and weight data.

Commenting on the company's approach, Interleukin CEO Lewis Bender said, "The interest level, usefulness and science of genetic testing have grown significantly over the past few years." He added, "We believe that evidence found through multiple studies linking specific genetic variants to potential negative health outcomes, when coupled with well-packaged and meaningful guidance, can provide consumers with valuable insights to improve their present wellness and future health outcomes."

Besides the Weight Management Test, Inherent Health will provide access a suite of genetic tests. With the Nutritional Needs Genetic Test, variations in metabolism of B-vitamins that can be identified in the DNA of clients will show if there is genetically-induced ineffective use of these vitamins, increasing the potential for cell damage due to oxidative stress.

With the Heart Health Genetic Test, the predisposition for heart attack can be assessed by way of genes involved in inflammatory responses. It identifies people who will most likely overproduce inflammation-related chemicals that over time, could lead to a heart attack. In addition, with the new Bone Health Genetic Test, greater susceptibility to low bone mineral density that leads to osteoporosis and spinal fractures can be identified.

Lastly, with the Periodontal Disease Genetic Test, currently available through dentists, an individual can discover whether there is a predisposition for periodontal disease and subsequent tooth loss due to over-production of

inflammation-producing compounds. Some are human interleukins produced in response to bacterial infection. Interleukin-related SNP gene variations in the population that were linked to periodontal and heart disease were the original interest of Interleukin Genetics.

Bender says the weight management test handling is not a great departure from their original periodontal testing business, as the company's CLIA-certified "lab is the same, science is the same, swabbing is the same."

In a recent interview with Bender, it was clear that he takes the matter of genetic testing as guidance for personal action quite seriously. His father, although still living, had several early bypass surgeries. Bender decided, "If I can avoid all that, I will."

He not only uses his company's tests, but has implemented many lifestyle and nutritional changes in his own life. Bender said, "We now need to pursue the end of life," in a different way than just addressing age and inflammation-related health problems after the fact, so people can have a "higher quality of life."

Bender's intense concern with the genetic risk of pro-inflammatory conditions will lead the company forward to not only develop more genetic tests, but also to find collaborative partnerships with pharmaceutical and biotechnology drug manufacturers to discover solutions to other chronic human diseases.

He believes that use of personalized testing can contribute to the creation of better clinical study designs, because some drugs work best in a more targeted subset of patients. His firm, which to date has patented more than 20 genetic SNPs and diagnostic methods, specializes in biomarkers of inflammation, metabolism, cardiovascular disease and osteoarthritis.

The company's new strategy of combining genetic testing with evidence-based guidance in a comprehensive direct-to-consumer package that can address weight gain, a condition that often leads to other chronic complications, appears to be a brilliant move on the preventive end of personalized medicine.

Tapping the emerging personalized health market in this way may turn out to be a highly successful business model, as well. ■

GE

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Healthymagination is focused on sustainable health, enabled by innovation that lowers cost, improves quality and touches more people, the company said.

"Our commitment to understanding disease from the beginning and utilizing this understanding for innovation, has the opportunity to revolutionize healthcare," Bresenham said. "At GE, we view innovation as a way to lower the costs in healthcare and improve the quality of outcomes for more people." ■

PRODUCT BRIEFS

- **Carl Zeiss Meditec** (Dublin, California) reported that a new suite of optical coherence tomography (OCT) software applications for the Cirrus HD-OCT has been cleared by the FDA for commercial distribution. The Cirrus HD-OCT 4.0 with Retinal Nerve Fiber Layer and Macular Normative Databases is indicated for *in-vivo* viewing, axial cross-sectional, and three-dimensional imaging and measurement of anterior and posterior ocular structures. Cirrus HD OCT software version 4.0 is DICOM compatible for use with Carl Zeiss Meditec's connectivity solutions, including VISUPAC Star and EMR platforms.

- **Clinical Innovations** (Salt Lake City) has launched its new disposable circumcision device, the AccuCirc, to help clinicians provide precise, consistent and reliable circumcision outcomes. The AccuCirc uses two components to complete the circumcision procedure: the foreskin probe/shielding ring and the single-action clamp. The Foreskin Probe/Shielding Ring ensures that the glans is protected and the foreskin is properly aligned, while the single-action clamp ensures adequate hemostasis and the precise delivery of the protected, circular blade.

- **DxNA** (St. George, Utah) said it has submitted a request to the FDA for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for its GeneSTAT pathogen platform, for the detection of the H1N1 virus (known as swine flu). EUA allows for the early availability of important diagnostic and therapeutics tools to diagnose, treat, or prevent critical or life-threatening diseases or conditions, when an alternative or approved solution is not available. The GeneSTAT platform includes a portable device that offers remote usage to rapidly detect pathogens where outbreaks are suspected. The device can be used in gateway airports, at local health departments and schools, where on-site rapid and non-invasive screening for highly contagious pathogens is advised. The GeneSTAT test module requires a simple swab of the mouth, nose or throat. The company is developing a number of follow-on tests to detect pathogens that may affect people and agriculture.

- **Filligent** (Hong Kong) is mobilizing stocks of its anti-infective BioMask to help combat the spread of Influenza A (H1N1) across Australia. Filligent claims that the BioMask is the first medical face mask to kill the Influenza A virus within seconds of contact while retaining the breathability required by front-line workers and children, who are often the first to fall in a contagious episode. The BioMask is a Class I medical face mask that traps and kills 99.9% of bacteria and viruses on contact.

- **MedApps** (Scottsdale, Arizona) has been granted FDA clearance for its expanded, flexible telehealth solution. The MedApps system features the HealthPAL, a small

portable personal health device, to collect and transmit readings from glucose meters, blood pressure monitors, weight scales and pulse oximeters. Timely health readings from these devices are useful in maintaining wellness regimens and can assist clinicians in their treatment of patients with chronic diseases. The collected data is automatically transmitted to a secure central server where it can be accessed by healthcare professionals or stored to an online electronic personal health record such as Microsoft HealthVault or Google Health.

- The **Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation** (MTF; Edison, New Jersey) has introduced BellaDerm — the first human dermal tissue graft offered specifically for facial and body contouring procedures. BellaDerm is a acellular matrix, derived from donated human allograft skin. BellaDerm provides supplemental support in areas of weakness. It has been used by plastic surgeons to address naturally occurring defects which may be found in areas such as the breast, lips, and face.

- **Nonin Medical** (Minneapolis) said its Bluetooth-enabled fingertip pulse oximeter, Onyx II, Model 9560 is now certified as compliant to the Continua Version One Design Guidelines. Nonin said by using the Bluetooth Health Device Profile (HDP) and ISO/IEEE 11073 data protocol, this Continua Certified product signifies a major step in the adoption of interoperable standards in telemedicine and chronic disease management such as COPD, CHF and asthma. Nonin specializes in noninvasive physiological monitoring solutions.

Obama

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who have been wrongfully harmed." Without going into specifics, Obama said, "I want to work with AMA so we can scale back the defensive medicine" reassuring doctors that "this is going to be a priority for me."

Despite all the concerns, Obama made the case that "reform is not a luxury, it is a necessity," stating further that "if we do not fix our healthcare system, America may go the way of GM," a reference to **General Motors** (Detroit), which is in the midst of a Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceeding.

"I know people are cynical," Obama said, but asserted, "we can't let this moment pass us by."

The reaction from the Republican Party preceded the speech, a move made possible by the pre-speech publicity of the content of Obama's speech. Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Virginia), the House minority whip, said in a statement that Democrats are "touting a government-run healthcare option that creates an unlevel playing field leading to the destruction of the private market, reducing choice and putting Washington bureaucrats in charge of family healthcare decisions." Cantor also said, "it's time for the administration to end the happy talk and get down to the difficult decisions ahead." ■

MDD'S CARDIO EXTRA

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ONE OF MED-TECH'S KEY SECTORS

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2009

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Keeping you up to date on recent headlines in cardiovascular healthcare:

BPA increases arrhythmias in female rodents Bisphenol A (BPA) has been linked to an increased frequency of arrhythmias in female rodents, a new study has found. Previous studies have shown that BPA may harm the reproductive, nervous and immune systems of animals. And one study has found an increased cardiovascular disease in people with high levels of BPA in their urine. In both working hearts and cultured heart muscle cells exposure to BPA increased the frequency of arrhythmias, compared to baseline, in female rodents but not in males. The arrhythmias were most frequent in the female rats and mice when they received both BPA and estrogen, at levels normally found in female humans. The results were presented Saturday at the annual meeting of the **Endocrine Society** (Chevy Chase, Maryland) in Washington. (<http://healthnews.uc.edu/news/?/8709/>)

Fenestrated endografts viable for juxta-renal, para-renal aneurysms

. . . . The use of fenestrated endografts to treat juxta-renal and para-renal aneurysms (adjacent to and involving the visceral segment of the aorta) after prior aortic reconstruction, is a viable alternative to open repair, according to a study presented at the just-concluded annual meeting of the **Society for Vascular Surgery** (SVS; Chicago) in Denver. Of 56 target vessels, all were successfully revascularized with a combination of: fenestrations with bare metal (12) or covered (25) stents; directional graft branches; or proximal graft scallops (18). There were no deaths at 30 days, and at one-year mortality was 11%. The procedures were performed using customized endografts from **Cook** (Bloomington, Indiana) "based on . . . preoperative 3-D imaging," said Adam Beck, MD, a vascular surgery fellow at **Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center** (Lebanon, New Hampshire).

(www.vascularweb.org/Media/2009_Vascular_Annual_Meeting/Fenestrated_Endografts_Prove_Viable_Alt.html)

Asymptomatic perioperative myocardial injury affects vascular outcomes

A new study reports that 75% of cardiac damage after vascular surgery is asymptomatic or patients' symptoms are concealed by postoperative complaints, such as nausea and incision pain, and is associated with increased mortality. Following surgery, cardiac damage occurred in 213 (14%) asymptomatic patients and 71 (5%) symptomatic patients; 13% of patients without cardiac damage died during follow-up vs. 40% with asymptomatic damage. The researchers said that screening for post-surgical cardiac damage – via cardiac troponin T (cTnT) measurement and ECG can identify high-risk patients who might benefit from more aggressive medical therapy. The findings were presented at the SVS annual meeting.

(www.vascularweb.org/Media/2009_Vascular_Annual_Meeting/Asymptomatic_Periooperative_Myocardial_In.html)

U-M, University of Utah lead hypothermia study of in children

In the first large-scale study of its kind, researchers at the **C.S. Mott Children's Hospital** at the **University of Michigan** (Ann Arbor) and the **University of Utah** (Salt Lake City) will study if hypothermia-lowering body temperature can prevent or reduce brain damage in children deprived of oxygen due to cardiac arrest. "Cardiac arrest in children is a tragic event that usually leads to death, or long term disability in survivors," said one of the researchers, and that no therapies have been shown to improve recovery. The Therapeutic Hypothermia After Pediatric Cardiac Arrest (THAPCA) trials begin this fall. The **National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute** is providing initial funding; with trial success, it could receive additional NIH funding for six years of subject accrual from 30 sites.

(www2.med.umich.edu/prmc/media/newsroom/details.cfm?ID=1184)

Recommended: screen relatives of patients with bicuspid aortic valve

A research study at the Cardiac Noninvasive Laboratory of **Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute** (Los Angeles) has indicated that a third of first-degree relatives (siblings, children or parents) of patients with bicuspid aortic valve (BAV) – two valve leaflets instead of the normal three — are likely to have enlarged aortas. This was found even in the absence of any other valve abnormalities. Nearly one-third of first-degree relatives with no heart valve abnormality had significantly larger aortas than expected for their age, gender and body size. “If you know that a relative does have bicuspid aortic valve, then you know that you should be screened,” said study author Kirsten Tolstrup, MD. The study appears in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

(<http://content.onlinejacc.org/cgi/content/abstract/53/24/2288>)

Immune cells ameliorate hypertension-induced heart damage in mice

Researchers at the **Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres** (Berlin) report that a specific type of immune cell, the regulatory T lymphocyte (Treg) plays an important role in hypertension-induced cardiac damage. The injected Treg that they harvested from donor mice into recipient mice were infused with angiotensin II, a BP-raising peptide. Tregs had no influence on the BP response to angiotensin II; however, cardiac enlargement, fibrosis and inflammation were sharply reduced by Treg treatment, and the tendency to develop abnormal heart rhythms was also reduced, and the hypertensive mice that received Treg cells, exhibited less cardiac damage. The researchers said it remains to be seen, if Treg cells will ever be used for short-time therapy. “However, perhaps the body’s own Treg could be recruited as a treatment.” The study appears in *Circulation* (Vol. 119, No. 22, June 9, 2904-2912).

(<http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/119/22/2904>)

Canada makes progress in heart attack prevention

The *Health Indicators 2009* report by the **Canadian Institute for Health Information** shows that heart attacks in Canada declined 13% between 2003-2004 and 2007-2008. There were 251 hospitalizations for heart attacks per 100,000 people in 2003, dropping to 219 hospitalizations per 100,000 in 2008. The rates do not include Quebec because of differences in data collection. The researchers attributed the reduction to less invasive procedures, such as earlier angioplasty, for treating heart conditions. The researchers also found decreases in the rate of stroke hospitalizations over the last five years, falling 14% from 152 per 100,000 between 2003-2004 to 130 per 100,000 in 2007-2008.

(http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/disPage.jsp?cw_page=PG_2150_E&cw_topic=2150&cw_rel=AR_152_E)

Program to focus on BP in African-Americans

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of African Americans with high BP say they worry more about their finances than their personal health, according to a new “My Pressure Points,” a survey commissioned by **Daiichi Sankyo** (Parsippany, New Jersey) in collaboration with the **Association of Black Cardiologists** (ABC; Atlanta). And almost half say they are stressed about their work. In response, ABC and Daiichi Sankyo are launching the “My Pressure Points” national education program to encourage African Americans to focus on their high BP as well as their external pressures and have established a resource at www.mypressurepoints.com.

In memoriam: Robert Brandenburg, MD

The **American College of Cardiology** reported the death of Dr. Robert Brandenburg, former president of the ACC, at his home June 5 in Bloomington, Minnesota. He was 90. Besides his service as ACC president, Brandenburg had served as chairman of the cardiology department at **Mayo Clinic** (Rochester, Minnesota). Brandenburg received the ACC’s Distinguished Fellowship Award in 1988. Following his retirement from Mayo in 1984, he and his wife moved to Arizona. He taught at the **University of Arizona Medical School** (Tucson), was a consulting physician at the **Tucson VA Hospital**, and served as president of the Green Valley chapter of the **American Heart Association**. The Brandenburgs returned to Minnesota in 2002. The family requests that donations be made to the AHA.

— **Compiled by Don Long, MDD National Editor**