



Pioneering Treatments—Again!

CMC first hospital in the world to offer new procedure to reduce stroke risk



Dr. Kim implanting the WATCHMAN in recipient Edith Hinds, the first woman selected for the ASAP TOO trial. EP Lab Tech Erika Lavard (left) assists with the procedure.

When Edie Hinds woke up from surgery, she raised her arms and cheered, “Yay! I got the WATCHMAN!”

On February 22, 2017, Edie became the first woman in the world to be enrolled in the ASAP TOO trial, which began the week prior at CMC. The trial is testing Boston Scientific’s WATCHMAN™ Left Atrial Appendage Closure (LAAC) device in patients who cannot tolerate blood thinning medications.

The WATCHMAN was developed for patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (AFib) as an alternative to the blood thinners they often take to reduce their stroke risk. AFib, or an irregular heartbeat, can cause blood to pool and clot inside the heart’s atrial appendage. That clot, if released, could cause a stroke. The WATCHMAN device closes off the left atrial appendage, preventing blood clots from forming without the need for blood thinners.

Edie was diagnosed with AFib in October of 2016. Working with her cardiologist at Laconia Cardiology and with CMC New England Heart & Vascular Institute (NEHVI) cardiologist Jamie Kim, MD, FACC, she began treatment at the New England Heart & Vascular Institute. It was soon discovered that Edie couldn’t tolerate blood thinners to reduce her stroke risk.

“I had a major fear of stroke. I know people who have suffered a catastrophic stroke,” Edie recalls. When Dr. Kim told her about the upcoming ASAP TOO trial, “I knew it was the only intelligent choice I could make.” ASAP TOO is putting a focus on enrolling female patients as part of a federal effort to ensure women are better represented in clinical trials.

CMC was the first commercial site in New England to implant the WATCHMAN device after its FDA approval in 2015, and quickly became one of the top implanting sites in the country. Until now, however, patients who had the procedure still needed to be on a course of blood thinners after surgery, meaning it was still off limits to those who can’t take the drug at all.



Edith “Edie” Hinds talking with NEHVI Clinical Research Coordinator Beth Cornelius, RN, BSN, the morning after her surgery.

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"These are the patients who need the treatment most of all," says William Rogers, Boston Scientific's Area Clinical Adviser for WATCHMAN. "With ASAP TOO, they now have an option."

After reading up on the trial, Edie met with Beth Cornelius, RN, BSN, the clinical research coordinator at NEHVI. "I realized then I would get excellent care," she recalls. "I wouldn't do it if it wasn't here."

The minimally invasive WATCHMAN procedure is performed in CMC's Electrophysiology (EP) Lab, often taking less than 90 minutes. The device is inserted in the left atrial appendage through a catheter. Patients are typically in the hospital overnight and return for a follow up visit in three months time. ASAP TOO trial patients will continue with in-office and telephone visits every six months for up to five years.

"Boston Scientific is fortunate to have such a strong partner who is focused on procedural efficiencies and clinical outcomes," says Boston Scientific Territory Manager Scott Pippin. "The medical device community has very high expectations for therapies like the WATCHMAN as an alternative treatment for patients. ASAP TOO marks yet another milestone that has been achieved due to this partnership."

CMC's WATCHMAN team is made up of NEHVI cardiologists, EP lab technicians, radiologists, nurses, and others. NEHVI cardiologist Connor Haugh, MD, FACC, conducted the first trial procedure February 15th. "We've had great success with the WATCHMAN," he said. "It's exciting to be able to extend this effective treatment to this group of patients— both for them and for us as their caregivers."

Edie admits that when she first enrolled in ASAP TOO, she was focused on improving her own health and reducing her stroke risk. "Now I see that I may be helping others, too." ■■



The WATCHMAN implant device

Total Heart Care— When You Need It

24/7 The only hospital in Manchester
to offer interventional cardiology
365 services for heart attack victims
24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You don't know when or if you'll have a heart attack; yet, you do know that effective, appropriate, and timely treatment can save your life. That's why CMC offers interventional cardiology services for heart attack victims 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Our nationally-recognized team of cardiologists from the New England Heart & Vascular Institute provides round-the-clock coverage for life-saving procedures. So take heart knowing CMC is here for you when you need it the most. ■■

What is Your Vascular Health?

Problems with the vascular system can lead to life threatening conditions like heart attack, stroke and limb loss. Routine vascular screenings can help in the early detection of these potentially serious problems. CMC's New England Heart & Vascular Institute (NEHVI) offers extensive vascular screening services in our state-of-the-art IAC Accredited Vascular Lab facility.

Anyone can experience vascular problems, though smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, age, obesity and heredity can lead to increased risk.

A vascular screening appointment lasts about 45 minutes and includes an ultrasound to screen for abdominal aortic aneurysm and Doppler imaging to assess the carotid arteries. The ankle-brachial index (ABI) screens for peripheral artery disease by measuring blood pressure in the arms and ankles. Results are mailed within a week of screening. Cost: \$95.00.

For questions or scheduling, call the Surgical Care Group at 603.627.1887. ■■