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**Dr. Julio Williams conducted Lufkin's first Transmyocardial  
Laser evascularization (TMR) heart procedure**

Using a high-energy, computerized laser, Dr. Julio Williams conducted Lufkin's first Transmyocardial Laser Revascularization (TMR) heart procedure Tuesday at Woodland Heights Medical Center.

Fifty-six-year-old Archie Williams became the first heart patient to undergo the new procedure that uses a carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) heart laser to create channels in the heart to improve blood flow.

During a three-hour procedure, Dr. Williams, a Lufkin cardiovascular surgeon, performed the TMR and a triple bypass on Mr. Williams.

The laser uses a computer to direct laser beams to the appropriate area of the heart in between heartbeats, when the ventricle is filled with blood and the heart is relatively still. This prevents electrical disturbances, arrhythmias, in the heart.

Dr. Williams created 17 channels in Mr. Williams' heart that are an average of one millimeter wide — about the size of the head of a pin. The channels stopped Mr. Williams' chest pain, which until Tuesday, could not be stopped by other medical procedures, Dr. Williams said.

Clinical evidence shows the channels act as bloodlines, and when the ventricle pumps blood out of the heart, it sends it through the channels, restoring blood flow to the heart. The procedure also may promote growth of new, small blood vessels that help supply blood to the heart, he said.

“Mr. Williams was admitted to the hospital four times in the last month for chest pain,” Dr. Williams said. “He had undergone several angioplasties, but they did not work for the long term.”

This laser procedure is relatively new, having been performed for about the past seven years. Dr. Williams said the procedure improves the quality of life for many angina patients who have no other options and want to live a more active life.

Dr. Williams said Mr. Williams was a good candidate for the surgery since he is young and had 30 percent function in his left ventricle. He said a bypass on this part of the heart would have been incomplete because of the extent of the coronary artery disease.

Patients who most benefit from this procedure have: severe angina which limits their daily activities or causes them to wake from pain at night, despite medications; have pre-operative tests that show decreased blood supply to the heart muscle; have a history of bypass surgery or angioplasty and no further intervention is available; and have been told by their physicians there is nothing that can be further done to help their symptoms, according to clinical studies.

Lance Jones, Woodland Heights CEO, said the state-of-the-art laser was recently added to the hospital’s technology.

“At Woodland Heights, we have made the commitment to continue to bring the newest technology to Lufkin. Having this CO2 laser in house and readily available to our highly skilled physicians ensures our patients are receiving the best care with the best technology available.”

Dr. Williams, who performed TMR procedures many times prior to his move to Lufkin last year, is in practice with Dr. Randall Blakestad at the Cardio-Thoracic Institute of East Texas located at 121 Gaslight Medical Parkway in Lufkin. Office hours are Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. His office can be reached at (936) 634-8854.

### **About Woodland Heights Medical Center**

Established in 1918, Woodland Heights Medical Center was Lufkin’s first hospital. Now, almost nine decades later, Woodland Heights is recognized throughout Deep East Texas as the leading provider of high quality, innovative health care services. In 2006, Woodland Heights Medical Center was named a Distinguished Hospital for clinical excellence—ranking in the nation’s top 5% for quality care. \* This year Woodland

Heights received the highest possible ratings for treatment of heart failure and was rated best in Northeast Texas for overall cardiac service. \* Recognized for its continued excellence in cardiac care, Woodland Heights is a five star rated hospital for the treatment of heart failure, cardiac interventions, treatment of heart attack and for cardiology services. \* Additionally, Woodland Heights is ranked number four in Texas for overall cardiac services and cardiology services.\* Accommodating a wide range of clinical specialties, Woodland Heights has achieved excellence in other key medical and surgical areas including neurology, orthopedic surgery, physical medicine/rehabilitation, vascular surgery and obstetrics and gynecology. Woodland Heights also offers a full range of outpatient diagnostic services including advanced imaging, laboratory, outpatient surgery and emergency services. Through its Rehabilitation Center, Woodland Heights offers cardiac rehabilitation, stroke recovery and physical and occupational rehabilitation. Combining modern facilities, leading technology, an exceptional staff and a commitment to the communities it serves, Woodland Heights Medical Center remains at the forefront of quality health care in Deep East Texas.

\* *Healthgrades*