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Contact: Dan Jacobs

Phone: 936-637-8542

Cell: 936-229-0072

[daniel.jacobs@woodlandheights.net](mailto:daniel.jacobs@woodlandheights.net)

### **Woodland Heights Introduces a Minimally Invasive Procedure for Treating Aneurysms**

Lufkin, TX, February 12, 2010 – Diagnosed with an abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) — a bulge in the wall of the body’s largest artery — Jerry Watson knew that the aneurysm could rupture at any moment. Equally unnerving, however, were the prospects of the major surgery and the potential of not working for months while he recovered.

“I was concerned because it could take 9-months to recover from major surgery,” said Watson. “I drive a truck and needed to get back to work quickly.”

The 17<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States, AAA is a weakness in the wall of the aorta, which is the main artery of the body. As passing blood presses against the wall, the pressure can cause the aorta to balloon out and rupture. It is estimated that only 200,000 of the 1.5 million people currently living with an AAA are actually diagnosed.

“I was happy I didn’t need open surgery to correct the bulge,” continued Watson. “The new treatment meant a short hospital stay and quicker recovery. After having surgery in November, I was back to work by New Years.”

Until recently, a diagnosis of AAA required major surgery. Now, however, a new minimally invasive procedure for treating aortic aneurysms is available at Woodland Heights Medical Center. Going through an artery in the leg, Dr. Julio Williams, Cardiothoracic Surgeon, can implant a graft to prevent the rupture.

“This minimally invasive procedure is far easier on the patient,” said Julio Williams, MD, Cardiothoracic Surgeon. “It requires a shorter hospital stay – about 1 to 3 days as compared to the 10 to 15 days with open surgery. Also, the endovascular AAA has quicker recover and a lot less discomfort or pain. For the most part, patients are sitting-up in a chair and consuming liquids as soon as they are conscious.”

According to recent studies, the minimally invasive procedure called EVAR (endovascular abdominal aneurysm repair) is as effective as open surgery and is shown to cut major complications associated with surgery by half. Dr. Williams, a Board Certified Cardiothoracic Surgeon at Woodland Heights Medical Center, has specific training, experience and expertise in endovascular repair and has successfully treated more than twenty-five patients.

If you suspect an aneurysm, speak with your family practice physician about screening. Or, if you don't have a family doctor, call 699-CARE for a referral. To learn more about the Woodland Heights Medical Center heart program, visit [www.woodlandheights.net/heart](http://www.woodlandheights.net/heart).

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

Established in 1918, Woodland Heights Medical Center was Lufkin's first hospital. Now, nine decades later, Woodland Heights is recognized throughout Deep East Texas as the leading provider of high quality, innovative health care services. Accommodating a wide range of clinical specialties, Woodland Heights has achieved excellence in key medical and surgical areas including cardiology, pulmonology, 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.