

# Phoenixville Hospital Among First In Region To Offer New Therapy For Stroke Prevention For Patients With A-Fib

Phoenixville Hospital is proud to be among the first hospitals in the Philadelphia region to offer patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (AF) a new stroke prevention therapy alternative to long-term warfarin medication with the newly approved WATCHMAN Left Atrial Appendage Closure Implant.

For patients with AF who are considered suitable for warfarin by their physicians but who have reason to seek a non-drug alternative, the implant is an alternative to reduce their risk of AF-related stroke. The implant closes off an area of the heart called the left atrial appendage to keep harmful blood clots from entering the blood stream and potentially causing a stroke. Over time, patients may be able to stop taking warfarin.

People with atrial fibrillation have a five times greater risk of stroke. Atrial fibrillation can cause blood to pool and form clots in the left atrial appendage and this is believed to be the source of the majority of stroke-causing blood clots.<sup>2</sup> Blood clots can break loose and travel in the blood stream to the brain, lungs, and other parts of the body.

Electrophysiologist Vadim Levin, MD is one of the region's most experienced physicians in treating patients with atrial fibrillation. Dr. Levin was among the first few physicians in the state of Pennsylvania to perform the left atrial appendage closure implant procedures. "For patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation who are seeking an alternative to warfarin, this device offers a potentially life-changing stroke risk treatment option which could free them from the challenges of long-term warfarin therapy," says Levin.

Implanting the device is a one-time procedure that usually lasts about an hour. Following the procedure, patients typically need to stay in the hospital for 24 hours. FDA-approved in the United States, the device has been implanted in more than 10,000 patients and is approved in more than 70 countries around the world.



## About Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a heart condition where the upper chambers of the heart (atrium) beat too fast and with irregular rhythm (fibrillation). AF is the most common cardiac arrhythmia, currently affecting more than five million Americans. Twenty percent of all strokes occur in patients with AF, and AF-related strokes are more frequently fatal and disabling. The most common treatment to reduce stroke risk in patients with AF is blood-thinning warfarin medication. Despite its proven efficacy, long-term warfarin medication is not well-tolerated by some patients and carries a significant risk for bleeding complications. Nearly half of AF patients eligible for warfarin are currently untreated due to tolerance and adherence issues.

*Dr. Vadim Levin is an electrophysiologist with PMSI Cardiology, who performs left atrial appendage closure implant procedures exclusively at Phoenixville Hospital. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Levin or to learn more about the Watchman implant, call 610-326-8005, extension 184.*

