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Frank G. Gress, MD
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Department of Medicine

RE: Heartburn Treatment: Consultative services and minimally invasive treatments for gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) now available at SUNY Downstate Medical Center

Dear Colleague,

The Division of Gastroenterology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center is pleased to announce the opening of our new Esophageal Diseases and Motility Center offering consultation services for Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), the condition that causes chronic reflux and other associated symptoms. In addition, Impedance Manometry and 24 hour pH Testing are available as well as new, minimally invasive endoscopic methods to treat certain patients with GERD.

As you are aware, fourteen million adults in the U.S. suffer from significant GERD symptoms daily, and GERD can be a chronic disease. It is true that GERD symptoms can often be well controlled with medications such as proton pump inhibitors (PPI's) or H2 receptor antagonists, (H2RA), in the majority of patients. However, there are patients who are intolerant to the medication side effects, have inadequate symptom control on prescription medications or are unwilling to take daily medications. In addition, many patients with chronic reflux can have complications of GERD such as esophageal strictures, Barrett's esophagus, significant regurgitation, or intractable reflux and may benefit from endoscopic therapy of GERD. In addition, these procedures are a less invasive alternative to anti-reflux surgery.

Endoscopic treatment options for GERD are evolving. Currently there are FDA approved modalities for endoscopic fundoplication techniques including the NDO Plicator device. Our Center currently offers the NDO Plicator procedure to select patients.

The NDO Plicator procedure involves placing a device at the GEJ to improve the barrier function of the LES. Side effects may occur in up to 10% of patients and are usually self limited. They include pain and superficial mucosal injury. Multiple clinical studies have shown that the procedure can reduce GERD symptoms and the need for chronic PPI drug therapy to control symptoms, improve quality of life, and reduce acid exposure in the esophagus. In one study, at 12 months, 40% of patients were off medications and an additional 21% of patients were only using over-the-counter medications. This procedure is also FDA approved.

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This procedure takes approximately 30-40 minutes and is performed in the endoscopy suite with moderate sedation. Most patients go home approximately 1-2 hours after the treatment session and typically resume normal activities the following day.

As you are aware, our Division has extensive experience and expertise in diagnosing and treating GERD. We offer various diagnostic modalities to diagnose typical and atypical GERD, such as 24-hour pH monitoring, Bravo probe wireless pH monitoring and esophageal motility studies.

We will be working closely with our motility service to ensure that appropriate work-up is done which will improve patient selection and optimize response to treatment. The decision to treat with one procedure or the other will be based on individual patient symptoms, clinical findings and preference.

Barrett's esophagus is a premalignant lesion of the esophagus and a complication of chronic GERD. Patients with Barrett's require periodic endoscopic surveillance. If low grade or high grade dysplasia is discovered, treatment options include esophagectomy or endoscopic ablation techniques including photodynamic therapy (PDT), endoscopic mucosal resection (EMR) and BARRX. We currently offer all of these techniques for non-operable patients or those wishing a less invasive treatment. In addition, we offer the esophageal pill cam for screening select patients with chronic GERD symptoms. This pill endoscopy allows us to view the esophageal mucosa in detail to rule out complications related to reflux disease such as Barrett's esophagus.

If you are treating any patients who you think might benefit from our consultative services or these procedures or if you are interested in referring a patient or obtaining more information, please call our office at 718-282-7234 to arrange for a consultation or if you prefer, we would be more than happy to talk with you directly.

Sincerely yours,

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