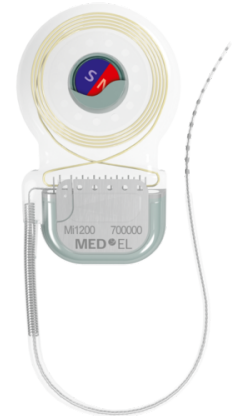


First U.S. Patient Receives MED-EL's SYNCHRONY Cochlear Implant

UNC implants patient with history of back surgery, need for future MRI

March 24, 2015 - (DURHAM, NC) - MED-EL USA announced today that the first SYNCHRONY cochlear implant has successfully been implanted at the University of North Carolina Hospitals. The surgery was performed on Joe Long, 83, who has a history of back surgery, and a likelihood of future 3.0 Tesla (T) Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) examinations.



"The upper age limit of cochlear implant candidates continues to rise," said Harold Pillsbury, MD, Chair, Department of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery, University of North Carolina School of Medicine. "With age comes an increased risk for diseases that rely on the latest diagnostic technology, like 3.0 T MRI. UNC is proud to be the first facility in the country to offer SYNCHRONY's cutting-edge cochlear implant technology."

SYNCHRONY was approved by the FDA in January 2015. Widespread commercial availability will be announced in the coming weeks. The implant's revolutionary magnet design is approved for 3.0 T MRI examinations which allow imaging of organs and tissues at higher resolution. MRI usage is on the rise, at a rate of approximately 10% per year. The SYNCHRONY implant is the first and only cochlear implant that is conditionally safe at 3.0 T without the surgical removal of the internal magnet.

The magnet of a cochlear implant device holds the external audio processor in place. Previous magnet designs are only robust against MRI field strength of up to 1.5 T. SYNCHRONY's diametrically aligned magnet freely rotates within its titanium housing and aligns itself with the magnetic field in the MRI tube. Due to the self-alignment feature, there is no risk in a loss of implant magnet strength during MRI scans and no torque acts on the magnet in the MRI tube.

Mr. Long underwent his first back surgery 50 years ago and has had two more surgeries since then. His bilateral moderately-severe to profound sensorineural progressive hearing loss began more than 13 years ago. He used hearing aids for more than a decade, but his hearing loss progressed to the point that he continued to struggle with everyday understanding and communication with the use of traditional hearing aids. With SYNCHRONY cochlear implants, MRI technology can be used to monitor his back regularly in the future.

"Providing the sense of hearing, together with the peace of mind knowing that future MRIs are possible without the need for additional surgery, is a major quality-of-life advancement and MED-EL is proud to be the leader in making this technology available," said Raymond Gamble, President & CEO, MED-EL North America.

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About MED-EL

MED-EL Medical Electronics is a leading provider of hearing implant systems worldwide. The company was founded by Austrian scientists and industry pioneers Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair, who together developed the world's first microelectronic, multichannel cochlear implant in 1977. The cochlear implant was and remains the first replacement of a human sense, the sense of hearing. In 1990, the Hochmairs laid the foundation for the successful growth of the company when they hired their first employees. In 2013, Ingeborg was awarded the prestigious Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award in recognition of her contributions to the development of the modern cochlear implant. In 2015, the

National Academy of Engineering awarded Ingeborg and Erwin the Russ Prize for their achievement in bioengineering. MED-EL is the only hearing implant manufacturer to have its founders and CEO hold this distinction. Today, the privately-held company has more than 1,500 employees around the world.

Individuals in more than 100 countries enjoy the gift of hearing with a MED-EL Hearing Implant System. MED-EL's mission is to overcome hearing loss as a barrier to communication and quality of life. Globally, the company offers the widest range of implantable solutions worldwide to treat the various degrees of hearing loss, including cochlear, middle ear and bone conduction implant systems as well as a system for combined electric and acoustic stimulation. www.medel.com

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