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PRESS RELEASE

--- For Immediate Release ---

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The Heart Center's 3D Heart Scanner is Already Saving Lives --- 'Grand Opening' May 4 ---

Breakthrough Cardiac Technology will 'Revolutionize' Diagnosis and Treatment of Heart Disease

Huntsville, Ala – The Heart Center, one of the nation's leading private cardiology practices, announced today that its 3D Heart Scanner is fully operational and is now available to patients. The Scanner, a "64 Slice" 3-Dimensional CT Scanner manufactured by Siemens, is the first such device in Alabama, and only the second in the nation to be deployed by a private cardiology practice.

A 'Grand Opening' will take place on Wednesday May 4 from 4:00 p.m. through 7:00 p.m. with a ceremonial ribbon cutting by Mayor Loretta Spencer at 4:30 p.m. and an overview of the new equipment by Dr. Michael Ridner. Area leaders have been invited.

"This new 3D heart scanner is the single most important diagnostic breakthrough in my 20 years of cardiology", said Dr. Michael Ridner, the Heart Center's Medical Director for CT Angiography and Cardiac Catheterization. "We expected that the scanner would significantly improve our ability to diagnose previously undetected heart disease and reduce patient risk, but the results we have been getting have greatly exceeded our expectations. This will completely revolutionize the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease."

According to the American Heart Association, each year over 850,000 people are diagnosed with heart problems. However, almost half of them receive their first warning signs in the form of a fatal heart attack.

“This new technology will enable us to identify those people who are unaware that they are at risk,” said Dr. Ridner. “President Clinton is an excellent example of someone who had access to the best cardiac care in the country, but still had an undiagnosed heart problem. This new 3D heart scanner can help us identify patients who are potential ‘walking time bombs.’”

During equipment tests following the delivery of the scanner in mid-March, several volunteer patients were diagnosed with previously undetected heart disease. One patient, a local businessman in his late 40’s who ran marathons, considered himself in excellent physical condition. However, the 3D scanner revealed a 95% blockage of a key artery. “He was probably a few weeks or months away from a fatal heart attack,” said Dr. Ridner. “A stent was successfully inserted in the blocked artery to restore normal blood flow. He is already back at work.”

The 3-D Heart Scanner, a “64 Slice” CT Scanner, is a 3-D imaging device manufactured by Siemens that takes over 200 images per second and allows the capture of highly detailed images. This enables cardiac professionals to see structures in the heart and blood vessels as small as one-hundredth of an inch. “We are seeing things now that we never saw before,” said Dr. Ridner. “It’s like looking at pictures from an anatomy book in 3-D.”

The Siemens 64-slice scanners have been featured in recent special reports on both ABC TV’s “World News with Peter Jennings” and “NBC News with Tom Brokaw.”

Two types of non-invasive procedures will be performed. A preliminary “Heart Screen” takes less than 2 minutes. For those who show potential symptoms of coronary disease, a more detailed “Heart Scan” can be performed. Both tests are non-invasive and patients can remain fully clothed.

“This is a major milestone for our patients, and a dramatic step forward in stopping our area’s Number One Killer – heart disease,” said Heart Center CEO Larry Johnston. “This 3D Heart Scanner will help us meet our twin goals of providing the area with the most advanced cardiac care in the country, and of detecting undiagnosed cardiac disease. Our cardiologists say that the most traumatic part of their jobs is having to notify the

families of apparently healthy people that their loved one has just died of a heart attack. Our mission is to make those tragic deaths a thing of the past.”

The Heart Center is currently taking reservations for both Heart Screens and Heart Scans. Reservations can be made over the phone at (256) 519-8428 during business hours of 8: a.m. to 5 p.m.

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About The Heart Center, P.C.:

Founded in 1979, The Heart Center, P.C. is one of the nation’s largest private cardiac and vascular care facilities with 28 Board-Certified cardiologists. The Heart Center services a population of one million people and currently has seven (7) locations in North Alabama and South Central Tennessee including offices in Huntsville, Decatur, Athens, Guntersville, Sheffield, Scottsboro, and Fayetteville.

In addition to providing state-of-the-art cardiac and vascular services, The Heart Center has one of the nation’s largest non-university based research departments, Oracle Research (see www.OracleRes.com for more information). The Heart Center was also one of the first cardiology practices in the country to deploy a cardiac specific Positron Emission Tomographic (PET) Scanner (see www.petheartcenter.md for information about PET Scanners).

The Heart Center P.C. provides full-service adult cardiology including the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and education of diseases of the heart and blood vessels. Dedicated to delivering the most comprehensive patient care, The Heart Center utilizes state-of-the-art medical technologies.

To learn more about The Heart Center, PC, visit them at www.theheartcenter.md. The main office is located at 930 Franklin Street Huntsville, Alabama 35801, (256) 539-4080. The Heart Center accepts patients directly or you may seek a referral from your family physician or other specialist.