HEROES IN MEDICINE

SALUTE THE HEROES AMONG US!

2013 Nomination Form/Narrative

Name of Nominee W. Anthony Lee MD, FACS
Name of Nominator Viviana Boronat

Please describe in 500 words or less why the nominee(s) is (are) qualified for the award. Please include specific examples.

When one thinks of the words, "Innovation Hero", it describes an individual with great drive and courage of conviction whom strives to surpass the recognized "conventional" treatments in healthcare today. It is with these qualities, that the individual embraces the innovative world of research by advancing technology to HEROIC levels.

W. Anthony Lee MD, Director of the Endovascular Program at Boca Raton Regional's Christine E. Lynn Heart and Vascular Institute, immediately comes to mind when describing what it means to be an "Innovation Hero"!

Dr. Lee specializes in the endovascular repair of aortic aneurysms. While most aortic aneurysms occur in a short section of the abdominal aorta, some can involve the complete length of the aorta called a thoraco-abdominal aortic aneurysm (TAAA). This type of aneurysm is usually treated by a complicated six-hour surgery that requires a major incision, starting from the back of the ribcage to below the belly button. This "conventional" operation represents the biggest surgical trauma the human body can tolerate. The typical hospital stay involves up to one-week in intensive care and two-three week hospital stay. The risks of death and complications associated with the procedure are significant and post-operative recovery can take months.

Alternatively, minimally invasive procedures to repair TAAA utilized "custom manufactured" stent grafts that were only available in a couple of tertiary care centers in the US. These procedures require a six-eight week delay before the aneurysm could be repaired due to the manufacturing process of the stent graft, placing the patient at an unnecessary risk of aneurysm rupture.

Currently, the Zenith t-branch stent graft is an advanced investigational device currently undergoing an FDA approved clinical trial at Boca Raton Regional Hospital under the direction of Dr. W. Anthony Lee. It is the first and only medical device that can be used for endovascular repair of a thoraco-abdominal aneurysm that is readily available and completely "off the shelf", meaning immediate accessibility to the physician, allowing the procedure to occur in a time frame that is most ideal for the patient. This device eliminates the long wait time for the custom devices to get built as well as the need for large incisions that involve two body cavities. In addition, the use of this device, typically only requires two needle punctures in the groin and a small incision in the arm pit. It is believed the use of this device could lead to decreased time in the ICU and a more rapid recovery when compared to conventional surgery.

On January 25th 2012, Dr. W. Anthony Lee successfully completed the first procedure of its kind in the United States utilizing the new" Zenith t-Branch Stent Graft" to repair a life threatening thoraco-abdominal aortic aneurysm in a 76 year old women from Boca Raton. The procedure was a success and the patient was discharged to home after a 3 day hospital stay. Recently, the patient returned for her 1-year follow-up and is doing remarkably well!

Innovative Hero? I believe that question has been answered! ☺