

April 2002

Amplatzer Septal Occluder

Instead of enduring months of post-surgical recovery, three year old April Xiang went home from Carolinas Medical Center the day after her pediatric cardiologist repaired a hole in her heart. She didn't need surgery at all.

Herbert Stern, M.D., of the Sanger Clinic is the only physician in the area trained to use the Amplatzer Septal Occluder, recently approved by the FDA for non-surgical repair of atrial septal defects, or holes between the upper chambers of the heart.

April was born with the heart defect, and without medical intervention, she faced a lifetime of cardiac complications. Open-heart surgery was an option, but would have meant months of recovery. Because of Dr. Stern's specialized training with the Amplatzer Occluder, April didn't suffer any of those consequences.

During the procedure at Carolinas Heart Institute, a catheter was inserted into one of April's veins. Using x-rays and echocardiology, Dr. Stern fed the catheter through the vein and into April's heart. He measured the defect and selected the appropriate size occluder. He then loaded the repair device onto the catheter, and threaded it into the heart.

The device was positioned – first on one side of the hole, then the other. Once properly in place it was released, and the heart defect sealed. Two hours after the procedure, April was awake, smiling, and talking with her parents.

The Amplatzer Septal Occluder won FDA approval in January of this year for use in repairing congenital heart defects like April's. Dr. Stern has performed the procedure on eight patients since that time, and is the only physician in the Charlotte area trained to do so. Patients normally spend only one night in the

hospital, but Dr. Stern hopes the procedure will soon be performed on an outpatient basis.

Dr. Stern will be joined by April and her family for an 11:30am news conference on Tuesday, April 16th, at Carolinas Medical Center. Video of this breakthrough procedure will be available, and all those who took part in it will be on hand to answer questions.

Through compassionate patient care, innovative medical procedures and a strong sense of community, the Sanger Clinic has built a reputation of trust and stability in the Carolinas. Founded in 1946 by Paul W. Sanger MD, the Sanger Clinic has grown to include an impressive staff of adult and pediatric cardiologists, and cardiac, thoracic and vascular surgeons. With 11 locations in both North and South Carolina, the Sanger Clinic offers convenient access to heart care. For more information, visit our website at www.sangerclinic.com