



# The AFIB News

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*Getting to the Heart of the Matter*

WINTER EDITION 2010

AdvancedAFIBCenter.com

## We're Here To Help

### Happy New Year!

As we enter a new decade, we would like to take the time to remind you that we are here to help with your health care questions and concerns regarding atrial fibrillation (AFIB). Treatments are evolving and the various options can be difficult to understand. St. Joseph's Hospital Advanced Center for Atrial Fibrillation provides a range of educational materials and a free consultation with an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) for individuals who have previously been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation to discuss potential non-drug treatment options. Because of the great diversity in patients with AFIB and the wide variety of treatment options, a generalized approach to treating atrial fibrillation is difficult. That is why we have assembled a team approach.

### The First Step

- No prescription or referral is needed to take advantage of the free consultation with the ARNP. The ARNP will review your cardiac history, related family history and other clinical data that your doctor may have collected in diagnosing you with atrial fibrillation. This information will be shared at the Weekly Clinics in order to review cases on an individual basis and then provide direct feedback to you.
- If you meet clinical criteria for nonsurgical and/or surgical intervention, we will expedite a consultation for you with an electrophysiologist or surgeon who performs these services at St. Joseph's Hospital.
- The Center's staff will communicate (with your permission) any recommendations generated during the consultation to any physicians that you designate.



### Our Clinical Team

We would like to take this opportunity to re-introduce you to our team and welcome our newest team member.

#### **Gary H. Dworkin, M.D.**

Dr. Gary Dworkin has joined our team and is our surgical expert in treating atrial fibrillation. He received a combined Bachelor of Arts and Master of Science degree from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and pursued his medical degree at the Medical College of Ohio. His internship and general surgery residency were performed at the Medical College of Virginia. Following his general surgical training, Dr. Dworkin completed a thoracic and cardiovascular surgical fellowship and a year of laboratory research at the Medical College of

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## Come Meet Our Team

Join us at one of our upcoming AFIB Community Seminars. To register, please call (813) 443-2088.

### Wednesday, February 24, 6pm

St. Joseph's Hospital  
Medical Arts Building, Classrooms 3 & 4

### Wednesday, April 21, 6pm

St. Joseph's Hospital  
Medical Arts Building, Classrooms 3 & 4

Virginia, and joined the Cleveland Clinic as a clinical associate. In 1992, he relocated to the Tampa Bay area to join the surgical group at Cardiac Surgical Associates.

Dr. Dworkin is a Diplomat of the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Thoracic Surgery. He is a member of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons and currently is president-elect of the Florida Society of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons. Dr. Dworkin was one of the first surgeons to perform the Cox-Maze III procedure in the state of Florida. He has worked with industry leaders to develop new techniques as well as technology for the surgical treatment of atrial fibrillation and now combines the Maze operation with other cardiac surgical procedures.

Finally, Dr. Dworkin and several of his partners at Cardiac Surgical Associates have formed the Atrial Fibrillation Work Group in which they publish papers and give presentations on atrial fibrillation surgery as well as serving on advisory boards for industry leaders. Dr. Dworkin has dedicated his professional life to his patients and continually works to provide superior medical care.

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### James M. Irwin, M.D.

Dr. James Irwin received his B.S. from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, and his M.D. from Penn State University in Hershey, Pennsylvania. He completed his internal medicine residency at the University of Pittsburgh, Presbyterian and Veterans Administration Hospitals and received his fellowship training in cardiology/electrophysiology and pacing at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina. Dr. Irwin is triple board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine with subspecialties in cardiovascular diseases and clinical cardiac electrophysiology.

While Dr. Irwin performs a full range of interventional procedures to treat various cardiac issues, he is dedicated to using catheter-based approaches to cure atrial fibrillation. Under Dr. Irwin's leadership, St. Joseph's Hospital became one of three U.S. sites to participate in the Phase I Arctic Circler clinical trial in 2003. The trial used a novel expanding loop cryo-ablation catheter (Arctic Circler®) to isolate pulmonary veins in treating atrial fibrillation.

Dr. Irwin sits on scientific advisory boards and is a paid consultant for multiple industry leaders focused on developing curative therapies for atrial fibrillation. Dr. Irwin is also involved in three important studies: CryoCath, Atritech – The WATCHMAN System, and Magellan Clinical Trial – BARD High Density Mesh Ablation System (HDMA).

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### Connie Ramos, ARNP

Connie received her BSN from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, and her master's degree as an Acute Care Nurse Practitioner from the University of South Florida in Tampa. She has spent most of her career caring for cardiac patients. During the first six years of her career, she provided direct patient care in the cardiac intensive care unit. After receiving her master's degree and moving to New York City, she managed the clinical needs of the Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery for St. Vincent's Hospital.

Connie has always had a strong interest and passion for the prevention and treatment of cardiac disease. Along with Dr. Irwin and Dr. Dworkin, she shares an enthusiasm for the treatment of atrial fibrillation.

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### Support Groups

The St. Joseph's Advanced Center for Atrial Fibrillation's mission is to educate the public on new advances in treatment for AFIB. In addition, we would like to be a support for all who suffer from AFIB.

If you are interested in beginning a support group for AFIB through our Center, please e-mail [connie.ramos@baycare.org](mailto:connie.ramos@baycare.org) or call (813) 443-2088.

**To learn more about your AFIB or to schedule a free consultation, please contact St. Joseph's Hospital Advanced Center for Atrial Fibrillation at (813) 443-2088.**