Medtronic News

Actress and Dancer Debbie Allen Teams Up With Medtronic and Urges Americans to "Join the Pace Makers"

Campaign Empowers People With a Slow Heartbeat to Learn About Treatment Options and How to Have an Informed Discussion With Their Doctor

NEW YORK, Nov. 10, 2011 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ --

Famed dancer, actress, and director Debbie Allen has teamed up with Medtronic, Inc. (NYSE: MDT) today to kick off "Join the Pace Makers," a national campaign designed to empower people with a condition called bradycardia, also known as a slow heartbeat, to learn about their available treatment options so that they can have an informed conversation with their doctor.

To view the multimedia assets associated with this release, please click:http://www.multivu.com/mnr/52990-debbie-allen-and-medtronic-join-the-pace-makers

(Photo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20111110/MM01406)

People living with bradycardia can experience a number of symptoms ranging from general lethargy and shortness of breath to fainting or syncope. There are a number of treatment options available, including medication therapy and implanting a pacemaker, which delivers electrical pulses to help regulate a person's heartbeat.

Approximately 1.5 million people are living with a pacemaker, and that incidence is expected to rise due to an aging population. Anyone who needs a pacemaker, or knows someone who needs a pacemaker, can find the latest information about pacemaker safety, personal stories of people living with a pacemaker, Debbie Allen's personal story, and information about device options - including a pacemaker that allows for MRI access - on the campaign's website, www.jointhepacemakers.com.

"Heart disease runs in my family and, because of this, I know that any decision about heart health is an important one," said Allen. "I 'Joined' the Pace Makers because I believe in the power of a well-informed patient, especially when it leads to having a conversation with his or her physician about the right treatment option for them. I am a strong advocate for empowering patients to be an integral part of making the best healthcare decisions for themselves today so they can have the best healthcare in the future."

Perhaps best known for her roles in the movie and television series "Fame," and most recently directing and acting in the hit television show "Grey's Anatomy," Debbie has been dancing for her entire career and has had her fair share of muscle strains and torn ligaments, requiring three MRIs to help her doctors detect an injury. While it may be safe for Debbie to undergo an MRI, it can be dangerous for people who have a pacemaker due to the risks of harmful interaction between MRI and the device.

"MRIs are an important tool used to help detect and diagnose serious illnesses such as stroke, cancer, and neurologic disorders," said Lee Friedman, M.D., a radiologist at St. Petersburg General Hospital in Tampa. "As a radiologist, I recognize the value of patients being able to have an MRI; unfortunately, I've had to turn away pacemaker patients in the past who might have benefited greatly from MRI imaging. When I needed a pacemaker myself, I talked with my cardiologist about my options and having the option of a pacemaker that allows me access to an MRI was the obvious choice for me."

MRI scans are quickly becoming the preferred imaging technology among physicians due to the speed and accuracy of the picture it provides, allowing physicians to more rapidly make a diagnosis. Until recently, patients with implanted pacemakers were denied access to MRI procedures because the interaction can be harmful.(i,ii,iii,iv) Earlier this year, the FDA approved Medtronic's Revo MRI® SureScan® pacing system, the first and only pacing system in the U.S. designed for use in the MRI environment. Revo MRI is labeled "MR-Conditional," which means it requires a complete system consisting of the Revo MRI

pacemaker and two SureScan leads to be eligible under certain conditions for an MRI scan. The device was designed to reduce or eliminate several hazards produced by the strong electromagnetic fields present in an MRI environment, which can be as much as 30,000 times more powerful than the Earth's magnetic field.

According to a national survey issued by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) in February 2011, improved dialogue between patients and doctors about pacemaker options is needed. Results showed a significant lack of awareness among patients about the potentially harmful interaction between a traditional pacemaker and an MRI. As a result, Medtronic and NCOA will host educational seminars about heart health and pacemaker safety in conjunction with senior dances through NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers. Beginning in early 2012, these seminars will provide the local community an opportunity to learn about pacemaker safety, the latest available technology from a local healthcare professional, and what their options are should they ever need a pacemaker. To find more information about Join the Pace Makers and the local free senior dances, please go to www.JointhePaceMakers.com or www.ncoa.org.

About "Join the Pace Makers" Campaign

The Join the Pace Makers Campaign aims to empower people who may need a pacemaker, along with their loved ones, to be educated about their options and have an informed conversation with their doctor. This is important now more than ever because there are options, including a new device that allows for access to MRI imaging, which often is an important diagnostic tool. The campaign is sponsored by Medtronic, a global leader in medical technology, with participation from the National Council on Aging (NCOA), a nonprofit service and advocacy organization whose mission is to improve the lives of millions of older adults, especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. To learn more about the Join the Pace Makers Campaign, please visit www.jointhepacemakers.com. To learn more about NCOA, visit www.ncoa.org.

About Medtronic

Medtronic, Inc. (www.medtronic.com), headquartered in Minneapolis, is the global leader in medical technology - alleviating pain, restoring health, and extending life for millions of people around the world.

In collaboration with leading clinicians, researchers and scientists worldwide, Medtronic offers the broadest range of innovative medical technology for the interventional and surgical treatment of cardiovascular disease and cardiac arrhythmias.

i. Faris OP, Shein M. Food and Drug Administration perspective: Magnetic resonance imaging of pacemaker and implantable cardioverter-defibrillator patients. Circulation 2006;114:1232-1233.
ii. Roguin A, Schwitter J, Vahlhaus C, et al. Magnetic resonance imaging in individuals with cardiovascular implantable electronic devices. Europace 2008;10:336-346.

iii. Levine GN, Gomes AS, Arai AE, et al. Safety of magnetic resonance imaging in patients with cardiovascular devices: an American Heart Association scientific statement from the Committee on Diagnostic and Interventional Cardiac Catheterization, Council on Clinical Cardiology, and the Council on Cardiovascular Radiology and Intervention: endorsed by the American College of Cardiology Foundation, the North American Society for Cardiac Imaging, and the Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance. Circulation 2007;116:2878-2891.
iv. Kalin R and Stanton MS. Current clinical issues for MRI scanning of pacemaker and defibrillator patients. PACE 2005;28:326-328.

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Join-the-Pace-Makers