



# **Mary Washington Healthcare**

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Ground Breaking Treatment at Mary Washington Hospital Prevents Esophageal Cancer**

**Fredericksburg, Va. (May 20, 2014) – An outpatient treatment that destroys precancerous tissue in the lining of the esophagus is now available at Mary Washington Hospital.**

**The procedure, endoscopic radiofrequency ablation therapy using the HALO System by Barrx™ Medical, was recently featured in the New England Journal of Medicine as a highly effective treatment for complete eradication of Barrett’s esophagus, a precancerous condition that affects one to two million adults in the United States each year.**

**According to Chetan Pai, D.O. at Mary Washington Hospital who is specially trained in the ablation therapy, Barrett’s disease occurs when the esophagus is chronically exposed to gastric contents of the stomach caused by gastroesophageal reflux disease, commonly known as GERD. With prolonged acid exposure, normal cells in the esophagus can undergo a genetic change and are then vulnerable to further changes that can lead to cancer.**

**Individuals with Barrett’s esophagus have 40 to 130 times more risk of developing esophageal cancer than those without the condition. It is currently the fastest-growing form of cancer in the U.S.**

**“The main purpose of the ablation procedure is to ablate, or remove, the abnormal lining of the esophagus,” explained Dr. Pai. “The tissue then regenerates as normal tissue. This eliminates or markedly reduces the chances of cancer developing. Data from studies shows that the treatment is highly effective. It’s very promising.”**

**During the procedure, a HALO<sup>360</sup> or HALO<sup>90</sup> Ablation Catheter is positioned on the abnormal esophageal tissue. Using a HALO Energy Generator, the physician delivers a rapid burst of ablative energy that removes a thin layer of the diseased esophagus. The procedure is performed in an outpatient setting, without incisions, and takes less than 30 minutes on average.**

**For a person with Barrett’s disease, Dr. Pai says the risk of developing esophageal cancer is similar to the risk of developing colon cancer for patients who have a colon polyp. However, unlike a colon polyp, which is removed immediately upon diagnosis through a colonoscopy, before use of the HALO System, the standard treatment for Barrett’s disease was “watchful waiting” or surveillance to monitor disease progression.**

**“Previously, we could use ablation therapy to remove or destroy precancerous tissue, but the technology had limitations and wasn’t widely used,” said Dr. Pai. “The HALO System provides uniform and controlled ablative therapy, which not only removes the abnormal cells but also allows for regrowth of normal cells. It’s also easier to effectively treat patients using the HALO System, without injuring healthy underlying tissue.”**

**According to Dr. Pai, esophageal cancer is often incurable because the disease is frequently discovered in its advanced stages. Esophageal cancer has a five-year patient survival rate of just 16 percent.**

**“It usually starts with GERD, which can cause Barrett’s disease, which can lead to esophageal cancer,” said Dr. Pai. “That’s why it’s important to seek medical treatment for symptoms of GERD, the most common being heartburn.”**

*Mary Washington Healthcare is a fully integrated, regional medical system that provides inpatient and outpatient care through more than 40 facilities and services including Mary Washington Hospital, a 437-bed regional medical center, and Stafford Hospital, a 100-bed community hospital. Mary Washington Healthcare is a nonprofit health system and has a longstanding commitment to provide care regardless of ability to pay. For more information about our services and facilities, please visit [www.MaryWashingtonHealthcare.com](http://www.MaryWashingtonHealthcare.com).*