

## FIRST ARTIFICIAL CERVICAL (NECK) DISC IMPLANT PATIENT IN UNITED STATES - ENJOYS A SUMMER OF GOLF!

**INDIANAPOLIS** (SEPTEMBER 18, 2002) - Kevin Wacasey (41-years old) had to quit his job, he had minimum movement in his left arm and could barely move his neck. He never imagined that he would be playing golf again - yet playing in golf tournaments.

On November 13, 2001, Mr. Wacasey had a heart attack, en-route to the hospital the ambulance was in an automobile accident. As a result of the accident, Mr. Wacasey suffered a herniated cervical disc that severely limited his neck and left arm movement accompanied with chronic pain. This affected his activities with normal daily living. Intense pain management strategies were ineffective and did not relieve his pain or increase his mobility.

Enter Rick C. Sasso, M.D. an orthopaedic spine surgeon with Indiana Spine Group. Dr. Sasso evaluated Mr. Wacasey, who was an ideal candidate to participate in a cervical disc implant study being conducted.

On May 28, Mr. Wacasey was the first patient in the United States to receive an artificial cervical (neck) disc implant. This surgery performed by Drs. Rick C. Sasso and Kenneth L. Renkens, Jr. was performed at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis.

This groundbreaking implant surgery utilized an artificial cervical disc made out of titanium with a polyurethane nucleus. This advanced technology provides patients with more normal neck movement than the traditional fusion surgery.

The current standard surgical procedure involves the fusion of a bone from either the patient's hip or a human cadaver and the utilization of a metal plate. The use of the new artificial cervical disc eliminates the need for both the plate and human bone.

According to Rick C. Sasso, MD, one of the surgeons performing the surgery, "This surgical advance provides the patient with normal neck motion in comparison to the current procedure which traditionally limits neck mobility post-operatively."

Physicians with the Indiana Spine Group, which performed the surgery, are one of 12 centers in the United States who have access to this technology. To date, this is the only cervical disc implant performed in the United States, and three procedures have since been done in Canada. The technology used for the cervical disc implant is exciting in that it has been long anticipated by spine surgeons for four decades; i.e. since the first artificial hip joint replacement surgery in the 1960's. "This device, which resembles a normal disc, will become standard practice in the future. The patient benefits far exceed the current process utilized in anterior cervical fusion," states Kenneth L. Renkens, Jr. M.D.

The surgeons that performed this study are with the Indiana Spine Group. Rick C. Sasso, M.D. is a board certified orthopaedic spine surgeon and Kenneth L. Renkens, Jr., M.D. is a board certified neurosurgeon. The Indiana Spine Group is dedicated to spine and neck diagnostics and surgery. Additionally, the physicians are involved in research to further advance the diagnostics, treatment and surgery of the neck and back.