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## **MOST UFE PATIENTS NOT REFERRED BY GYNECOLOGIST**

BALTIMORE – Searching for an alternative to hysterectomy or surgery to remove uterine fibroids, women are learning about a minimally invasive treatment -- uterine fibroid embolization (UFE) -- but typically not from their gynecologists.

Only about 1 in 10 women who underwent UFE at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, were informed of the option by their gynecologists. In a survey of 100 women who had UFE at Northwestern, 79 (79 percent) said their gynecologists did not tell them about UFE: 64 (64 percent) said their doctors recommended hysterectomy, or surgical removal of the uterus, and 23 (23 percent) were steered to myomectomy, or surgical removal of individual fibroids. Results of the survey were presented at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting of the Society of Cardiovascular & Interventional Radiology (SCVIR).

“There were 13 gynecologists who did recommend UFE,” said Robert Vogelzang, M.D., chief of interventional radiology, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, and professor of radiology, Northwestern University Medical School. “But of the rest, at best they said they didn’t know anything about it and at worst, they said the procedure wasn’t effective. Several women were told in no uncertain terms that the procedure would result in severe

pain for weeks. None of the women who had the procedure at our institution experienced that.”

In a related Northwestern University study, only 14 (9 percent) of the 160 women who had the procedure in 2001 were referred by their gynecologists. The majority – 110 (69 percent) came to Northwestern after finding out about UFE through television, newspaper, magazine and Internet stories and advertisements, and 32 (20 percent) were referred by family and friends.

“More and more women are pursuing medical information on their own and are not necessarily content to follow the advice of their gynecologists. In this day and age of modern medicine, women are asking if there are treatment options besides major surgery,” said Dr. Vogelzang.

In addition to Dr. Vogelzang, co-authors of the study of gynecologists referring patients for UFE are: N.M. Lvoff, R.A. Omary, R.K. Ryu, H.B. Chrisman and S.A. Resnick. Co-authors of the study on how patients found out about UFE are: H.B. Chrisman, R.A. Omary, S. Resnick, M.B. Saker and A.A. Nemcek Jr.

An estimated 5,200 people are attending the SCVIR Annual Scientific Meeting in Baltimore. SCVIR is the professional society of interventional radiologists – physicians who specialize in minimally invasive, targeted treatments performed using imaging guidance. Interventional radiology procedures are an advance in medicine that replace open surgical procedures. They are generally easier for the patient because they involve no large incisions, less risk, less pain and shorter recovery times. To find out more information about interventional radiology procedures or to find an interventional radiologist, visit the SCVIR Web site, [www.scvir.org](http://www.scvir.org).

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