

November 17, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat Head and Neck Surgery Center  
256-C 10th Avenue NE  
Hickory, NC 28601  
828-322-2183

CONTACT INFORMATION:  
Shani Otterberg,  
Administrative CEO

## **Dramatic Difference in Hearing - Two Carolina ENT Patients Receive Remarkable Results with New Implant Device**

Hickory, NC – Patients who have struggled with conventional hearing aids now have a new option, surgically implantable hearing aids. Surgeons at Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat Head and Neck Surgery Center are now offering an implantable Bone Amplifying Hearing Aid otherwise known as the Baha® 3 implant system. Carolina ENT is the only practice in the Unifour region to offer this new advanced treatment.

“The Baha® 3 implant device is revolutionary for many of our hearing loss patients,” said Dr. Willard Harrill. “This system can significantly help certain forms of severe hearing loss that standard hearing aids struggle to correct.” The Baha implant is considered an implantable prosthetic device and unlike traditional hearing aids is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most insurance plans.

Eulan Brittain and Ruth Radford, patients of Dr. Harrill, have received the Baha device which allows them to hear more clearly and naturally through a process called direct bone conduction. They are very pleased with the results.

Dr. Harrill performs the specialized surgery during which he placed a tiny titanium implant hearing device into the bone behind the ear known as the mastoid. The short surgical procedure takes only about a half hour and is done as same day surgery.

Produced by Cochlear Americas in Colorado, the Baha device is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for patients over the age of 5. Ideal candidates for the Baha include people with conductive and mixed loss hearing, single-sided deafness, and people with chronic infection of the ear canal or a very narrow ear canal.

The Baha® 3 system includes three parts: a sound processor, an abutment and a small titanium implant. The sound processor picks up sound and converts it to vibrations. The abutment then transfers sound vibrations to the implant. The implant, which is placed in the bone behind the ear, fuses or bonds with the surrounding bone tissue over time, a process called osseointegration.

The Baha system is one of the first implant treatments for hearing loss that works through direct bone conduction, using bone tissue to transfer sound to a functioning cochlea, bypassing the middle ear.

Unlike conventional hearing aids, the Baha does not rely on amplification to improve sound tone or quality.

“I am able to hear so much better than when I wore hearing aids. I can hear without the volume so high. It’s 99.9% better,” said patient Eulan Brittain, who has struggled with hearing loss since he was a teenager.

Mr. Brittain explained that even his family and friends can notice a big difference with the Baha implant. He has to tell everyone to tone down their voices. Even on trips to the store and when talking with friends, Brittain can now understand people who speak low.

One of the biggest changes for Brittain was a significant improvement in his self-esteem. His confidence level is strong now. He is much more self-assured in his daily activities, according to his wife, Anita.

“I have a tremendous amount of trust in Dr. Harrill. My wife and I wholeheartedly agree. The Baha® 3 implant device is well worth the time and effort we put it into it.”

Ruth Radford said the surgery by Dr. Harrill went great! Since her early 20’s, Radford has suffered with hearing loss in one ear as a result of a childhood ear infection. Her ear drum eventually ruptured, requiring surgery, and hearing aids did not help due to chronic ear infections.

Dr. Julie Lohrman, an audiologist with Carolina Ear, Nose and Throat feels that “The common thread I’ve seen with all the patients we’ve implanted thus far is how much happier they are once their processor has been programmed. None of them have been successful traditional hearing aid users due to medical problems with their ears. The Baha has allowed them the freedom of better hearing regardless of whether or not they have an active outer ear infection or other contraindicated reason for not being able to use their hearing instrument on a full time basis.”

Mrs Radfor concurs “With the Baha device, now I have to turn down the TV volume. It was also difficult in church. I could not get everything that was being said. Now I can hear it all, from the preacher to Sunday school to doors closing. I am not missing anything.”

“I can even hear someone speaking behind me. I hear much better now, even the birds singing,” said Radford, who hopes her positive experience with the Baha device will help others.

Once the patient receives the hearing implant, it is programmed by an audiologist who is trained and certified to fit the device.

More than 36 million people in the United States have some degree of hearing loss, according to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

Dr. Harrill has extensive experience in the surgical management of ear disease and is Board Certified by the American Academy of Otolaryngology and is a Fellow of the Triological Society and of the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Harrill currently serves as of Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat’s Audiology Division.

For more information about the Baha® 3 system or to schedule an appointment, call 828-322-2183, or visit [www.carolinaearnosethroat.com](http://www.carolinaearnosethroat.com)



### ***About Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat Head and Neck Surgery Center***

Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat Head and Neck Surgery Center specializes in the medical and surgical treatment of the ear, nose, throat and sinuses for adults and children. Its state-of-the art facility includes an on-site CT scanner for immediate imaging and evaluation of chronic sinusitis, chronic ear disease, and cancers and tumors of the head and neck; an outpatient surgical and allergy center specializing in the treatment of sinus and nasal disorders; a speech and swallowing center; and a full-service audiology department featuring a comprehensive balance and hearing disorder clinic, including hearing aid fitting.

All physicians at Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat Head and Neck Surgery Center are board-certified or board-eligible by the American Board of Otolaryngology.

Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat Head and Neck Surgery Center is located in the Harry L. King Medical Building in the Viewmont section of Hickory with satellite offices in Lincolnton, Denver/Lake Norman, and Mooresville.

###