

♥ HEART HEALTH

Diagnosing Heart Disease: New Cardiac Scanner

(NAPSA)—More than 12 million Americans have a history of coronary heart disease, and approximately 500,000 of those people die each year. The American Heart Association reports that about half of those who die were never even hospitalized. These facts point to a clear need for a reliable, non-invasive and economical tool to diagnose heart disease at an early stage, and to track progression of disease in order to allow for successful medical care, doctors say.

Fortunately, new medical testing technology—called Multislice computed tomography (CT)—can help physicians diagnose heart disease in its earliest stages, without the need for surgery or direct angiography. Doctors believe this new cardiac scanner can improve the effectiveness of treatment and help slow down the progression of Coronary Heart Disease, a known cause of heart attacks.

Called the SOMATOM Sensation Cardiac, the new technology from Siemens Medical Solutions can visualize and differentiate coronary lesions in early, possibly pre-clinical stages. For example, CT imaging techniques are becoming the new standard for diagnosing non-calcified plaque, a main cause of heart attacks.

Here's how it works: the Sensation Cardiac CT scanner uses '16-slice' technology to produce four-times more speed, real-time image reconstruction and higher image resolution than today's more common, top-of-the-line, four-slice CT machines. This increased speed provides a dramatic difference, particularly when imaging moving organs such as the heart. Because more images are gathered in one rotation of the CT gantry and



Take heart: A new way to diagnose heart disease is saving lives—and saving the pain and cost involved with invasive diagnostic surgery, medical experts agree.

because each rotation is faster, doctors are able to gather more information in a shorter period, enabling them to make faster decisions.

The improved image quality of the new 16-slice scanner also allows doctors to see smaller vessels—including small coronary arteries with less than one-millimeter diameter—and other fine anatomical details they could not see before, without surgery. Non-calcified coronary plaques, associated with coronary artery disease and possibly acute heart attacks, may be visualized at an early stage of the disease.

The Sensation Cardiac may even allow for more effective control of pharmaceutical treatment, such as lipid-lowering agents, doctors agree. The technology also could be used to complete follow-up visits after surgery, eliminating the need for additional invasive procedures. To learn more, go to www.siemensmedical.com.