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To whom it may concern:

Re: Stretta

Dear Sir or Madam

On behalf of the American Foregut Society (AFS) I would like to outline the potential benefits of Stretta for the management of refractory gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). This is based on my extensive experience with this technology over the past 20 years, both in academic and community settings.

Stretta is a minimally invasive outpatient treatment for GERD done in an endoscopy unit. In my personal practice, it is indicated for patients who remain symptomatic despite a maximal course of proton pump inhibitors (PPI), or in patients who are unable to tolerate PPI therapy. In this respect, Stretta is an alternative to fundoplication. Fundoplication is generally performed for patients with severe GERD including those with severe esophagitis, troublesome regurgitation, Barrett's esophagus, and/or large hiatal hernia. Stretta, on the other hand, is appropriate for patients with mild to moderate drug resistant GERD without a hiatal hernia or hiatal hernia that is not greater than 2 cm. In fact, recent guidelines issued by The Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) give Stretta therapy for the treatment of GERD its highest recommendation based on evidence from 32 clinical trials.

I feel that the Stretta procedure is an option for those patients with mild to moderate GERD and/or GERD unresponsive to medication without esophagitis and a hiatal hernia less than or equal to 2 cm. Typically such patients have positive pH testing, received proton pump inhibitors twice daily for at least 2 months and remain symptomatic with an impaired quality of life due to reflux.

Stretta delivers low power and low temperature radiofrequency (RF) energy to the lower esophageal sphincter muscle and gastric cardia. It is thought to remodel the tissue, resulting in decreased distensibility of the gastroesophageal junction without fibrosis, decreased transient lower esophageal sphincter relaxations (TLESRs), and improved barrier function of the LES.

Many patients find fundoplication surgery to be invasive because it requires a hospital stay and post-op recovery. They are afraid of postoperative dysphagia and gas-bloat syndrome. Stretta is an outpatient procedure, performed in the Endoscopy Suite, and the patient goes home the same day with no significant side effects. Stretta is not associated with any significant morbidity or safety issues. For these reasons, I believe it should be covered and accessible for patients.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

George Traidafilopoulos and the American Foregut Society