Providing – Rhode Island Hospital is the one of the first hospitals in New England, and the only hospital in the Boston region, to perform a novel procedure designed to deliver energy to both the inside and outside of the heart to treat atrial fibrillation (A-fib). One of the first physicians in the country to perform this procedure, Antony Chu, MD, is the director of complex ablations within the arrhythmia services section at the Cardiovascular Institute of the Rhode Island and Miriam hospitals.

Prior to this, he was the director of atrial fibrillation at the Reading Hospital Medical Center in Pennsylvania and a clinical faculty member of the Thomas Jefferson University Cardiovascular Division. He is a graduate of the Yale University School of Medicine.

The procedure, known as “EX-MAZE,” is a minimally invasive surgical procedure designed to treat patients with long-standing A-fib. Many of these patients have had prior failed therapies including patients who have had prior cardiac ablation procedures. The technique uses radiofrequency energy to create “lines of block,” which modify cardiac electrical connections from blood vessels (known as pulmonary veins) attached to the top left chamber of the heart (left atrium). Radiofrequency energy is delivered both on the inside (endocardial) and outside (epicardial) surfaces of the heart. This technique effectively blocks the electrical signals from the pulmonary veins that cause the atrial fibrillation.

“This novel approach to a common but complex problem is great news for patients with long-standing atrial fibrillation,” Dr. Chu said. “For this patient population, all other medical therapy and traditional cardiac ablation approaches have been exhausted. This approach is not only minimally invasive (i.e. does not involve cardiac bypass), but also offers excellent outcomes with short recovery times.”

Quality Institute, BCBS offer incentives to increase enrollment in CurrentCare

Providing – The Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) and Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (BCBSRI) recently announced the launch of an incentive program for Rhode Island primary care physicians (PCPs) to adopt and use CurrentCare, Rhode Island’s health information exchange.

“We are very excited about this program,” said Jonathan Levis, MD, chief medical officer at Rhode Island Quality Institute. “By creating financial incentives for providers who adopt CurrentCare, the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island Incentive Program encourages improved patient care across the state.”

“CurrentCare has tremendous advantages for both patients and providers that make care more coordinated, safe and patient-centered,” said Dr. Gus Manocchia, chief medical officer for BCBSRI.

Key areas

Under the incentive program, eligible providers (those in family practice, pediatrics or internal medicine who are in compliance with BCBSRI’s EHR payment policy) may receive up to $10,000 in incentives per practice related to three key areas:

• CurrentCare enrollment: To qualify for incentives, PCP practices must enroll the greater of the following: at least 200 patients per affiliated PCP or enroll a number of patients equivalent to at least 50 percent of their BCBSRI members.

• Viewer and Hospital Alerts: PCP practices can qualify for additional incentive if at least 75 percent of their staff is trained on the online portal known as CurrentCare Viewer and the practice enables CurrentCare Hospital Alerts.

• Implementation of a Direct Messaging Account: This allows for secure electronic communication between providers who use different electronic medical record systems.