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First Results Reported on Use of the RITA® System for Ablating Lung Tumors

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MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif., May 15 /PRNewswire/ -- RITA Medical Systems (Nasdaq: RITA) announced today that an abstract published in the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting program reported the first results of the use of the RITA system for ablating cancerous tumors in the lung. The abstract included preliminary data on six patients treated using percutaneous imaging-guided radiofrequency ablation with the RITA Model 1500 generator and StarBurst™XL electrode. The aims of the study were to assess safety and early evidence of efficacy of the treatment with all patients observed in the hospital for 24 hours post procedure. CT scans taken one week following the procedure showed that radiofrequency lesions encompassed all of the ablated lung tumors.

The initial results are part of an ongoing study being conducted at St. George Hospital in Sydney, Australia. "These early promising results suggest that radiofrequency ablation may provide an option for local tumor control in patients with pulmonary tumors who are not candidates for surgery," commented Professor David Morris, M.D., one of the principal investigators in the study.

"We are very pleased with the progress on our research in the area of lung cancer," commented Barry Cheskin, President and CEO of RITA. "Although we recognize that additional clinical research will be required before we begin to promote our products for this application, we are very encouraged by the initial study results and consider this to be an important step in validating our platform technology in areas beyond the liver."

RITA Medical Systems develops, manufactures and markets innovative products for patients with solid cancerous or benign tumors. The proprietary RITA system uses radiofrequency energy to heat tissue to a high enough temperature to ablate it or cause cell death. The company has sold over 20,000 of its disposable devices throughout the world. While the company's current focus is on liver cancer, the company believes that its minimally invasive technology may in the future be applied to other types of tumors, including tumors of the lung, bone, breast, prostate and kidney. The company has received regulatory clearance in major markets worldwide, including the United States. In March 2000, RITA became the first radiofrequency ablation company to receive specific FDA clearance for unresectable liver lesions in addition to its previous general FDA clearance for the ablation of soft tissue.

The statements in this news release related to the company's plans to extend its technology to applications beyond the liver are forward-looking statements involving risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those in such forward-looking statements. Further information regarding these and other risks is included in the company's periodic filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including the company's Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2000 and the company's Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2001.

SOURCE RITA Medical Systems, Inc.
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