

RITA Medical Systems Appoints Jay Watkins To Board of Directors

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif., April 18 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- RITA Medical Systems, Inc. (Nasdaq: RITA) announced today that it has appointed former senior Guidant Corporation executive F.T. (Jay) Watkins, to serve as a Director, filling an open position on RITA's Board of Directors.

Watkins, currently an independent advisor to healthcare companies, was previously with Indianapolis-based Guidant Corporation, a world leader in the treatment of cardiac and vascular disease, where he most recently served as President of Compass, Guidant's corporate business development and new ventures organization, and was a member of the Corporation's management committee.

RITA President and Chief Executive Officer Barry Cheskin said, "I am confident that Jay's contribution to our Board will be significant. His background and expertise will be important to us as we continue to grow our core liver cancer business and expand our platform radiofrequency ablation technology into new markets to address cancers and other serious health concerns. We look forward to working with Jay and drawing on his extensive knowledge and experience."

Watkins co-founded Menlo Park, CA-based Origin Medsystems, Inc., a developer of orthopedic surgical devices and specialty endoscopic equipment, where he served as the company's founding President. Origin was acquired in 1992 by Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly & Company, a leader in the pharmaceutical industry. Watkins later became President, Minimally Invasive Systems Group, when in 1995, Lilly split-off several of its medical device businesses to create Guidant Corporation. During his tenure with Guidant, Watkins also served as President, Heart Rhythm Technologies and President, Cardiac & Vascular Surgery Group.

Watkins graduated from Stanford University and he received his MBA from Harvard University in 1979.

About RITA Medical Systems, Inc.

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. 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, uterus, 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 Company has sold over 35,000 of its disposable devices throughout the world.

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 filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

RITA is a trademark of RITA Medical Systems, Inc.

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