HEALTH ALERT!

Revolutionary Treatment Brings Hope To Sufferers Of Osteoporosis-Related Spinal Fractures

(NAPSA)—May is National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month, yet for the 44 million Americans at risk for osteoporosis, many are often unaware that they have the disease until they fracture a bone.

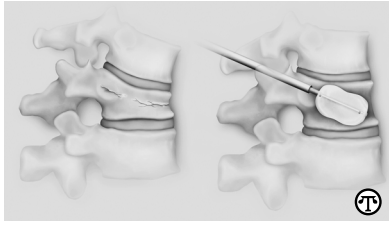
Imagine experiencing back pain so severe that daily activities such as walking, climbing stairs or grocery shopping are no longer possible. For Nancy Zacherl and many of the 700,000 others suffering from spinal fractures each year, this is a reality.

After suffering a debilitating osteoporosis-related spinal fracture, the once-active grandmother was no longer able to enjoy weekend motorcycle rides with her husband, take daily walks or play with her granddaughter. Instead, Zacherl was confined to bed because of excruciating back pain. Feeling depressed and helpless, Zacherl knew she had to see a doctor.

"I thought the pain would go away, but it became progressively worse, making breathing difficult," said Zacherl. "I was desperate for help and knew I needed treatment."

Upon the advice of her doctor, Zacherl visited Jon Ledlie, M.D., a renowned neurosurgeon at Tyler Neurosurgical Associates in Tyler, Texas.

Like most patients, Zacherl was surprised to learn that her back pain was the result of a spinal fracture, which occurs when one of the bones in the spinal column (vertebra) weakens and collapses. Zacherl was excited to learn that a minimally invasive treatment called Balloon Kyphoplasty could reduce her back pain as well as restore the height of her fractured vertebra.



While there are approximately 700,000 spinal fractures, also known as vertebral compression fractures (VCFs), occurring in the United States each year, only one-third are clinically diagnosed and treated, according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF). More than 220,000 spinal fractures worldwide have been treated with Balloon Kyphoplasty since 1998.

"Balloon Kyphoplasty has been shown to be an effective treatment for repairing spinal fractures and providing immediate and sustained improvements in pain and mobility," says Dr. Ledlie.

Furthermore, results of a first-ever, two-year study conducted by Dr. Ledlie and Dr. Mark Renfro found that after Balloon Kyphoplasty, a majority of patients experienced complete pain relief, required significantly fewer pain medications and showed improvement in their ability to walk independently and without difficulty. The study, published January 2006 in Spine, also showed that Balloon Kyphoplasty restored height and maintained the shape of the affected vertebra, results that were maintained for two years after treatment. According to the authors, such outcomes may have a positive effect on long-term health and survival.

Immediately following the procedure, Zacherl's improvements in pain and mobility were similar to those found in Dr. Ledlie's study.

"Balloon Kyphoplasty gave me back my life," said Zacherl. "The pain was gone and within days of the procedure, my husband and I took a long motorcycle ride and even went dancing."

With more than 44 million Americans at risk for osteoporosis, a disease that causes bone to become fragile, spinal fractures are a major health concern. Left untreated, multiple spinal fractures can result in kyphosis—a serious health condition marked by forward curvature of the upper back, often described as a "hunchback." Severe kyphosis can compress the abdominal cavity and elevate the risk for complications and death.

The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) estimates that half of American women and one-fourth of American men over the age of 50 will experience an osteoporotic fracture in their lifetime. To better understand your fracture risk, regular bone density screenings are recommended. For more information about spinal fractures and Balloon Kyphoplasty, please visit www.spinal fracture.com.

Note: Although the complication rate with Balloon Kyphoplasty has been demonstrated to be low, as with most surgical procedures, there are risks associated with Balloon Kyphoplasty, including serious complications. Consult with your doctor for a full discussion of risks.