New patient guidelines for heart devices

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A series of new guidelines for cardiac specialists has been developed to determine when heart failure patients should receive a mechanical heart-pumping device.

"The new guidelines will likely affect who is referred for a mechanical circulatory support device, and how early in the process a physician would consider implanting a left ventricular assist device," says Jeffrey A. Morgan, M.D., associate director of Mechanical Circulatory Support at Henry Ford Hospital. "These guidelines have the ability to change clinical practice patterns for patients with advanced heart failure."

Dr. Morgan will present the guidelines Saturday, April 16 at the International Society of Heart and Lung Transplantation (ISHLT) annual meeting in San Diego.

The left ventricular assist device (LVAD) is a battery-operated pumping device, surgically implanted to help a weakened heart pump blood.

Last year, approximately 2500 LVADs were implanted nationally, which is used chiefly for patients waiting for a heart transplant due to the chronic donor shortage. In other cases, it is used for long-term support in patients who are not eligible for a heart transplant.

Dr. Morgan played a leadership role in the formation of the ISHLT's Mechanical Circulatory Support Council that authored the guidelines, due to the high-quality, high-volume LVAD implant program at Henry Ford. The program has a growing national reputation in clinical,

academic and research areas.

Provided by Henry Ford Health System