



Ball State University joins Medical Animatics, LLC and Community Health Network for bariatric research project

Education and informed consent through interactive tool to be tested

Indianapolis, Ind. (February 26, 2008) -- Researchers from Ball State University are collaborating with Medical Animatics, LLC and Community Health Network to see if a first-of-its-kind program combining education and informed consent can better explain complex medical information than traditional educational methods.

Community Health Network is now offering a new multimedia education and informed consent program for its surgical weight loss patients. The program was developed by Medical Animatics and can be accessible from any computer with Internet access. It combines cutting-edge medical animation, video, audio narration and interactive programming into an easy-to-use interactive design. Unlike other patient education applications, this program uses proprietary knowledge-check technologies developed by Medical Animatics to ensure that patients see and understand information regarding bariatric surgery, as well as the associated benefits and risks involved.

Corinne Renguette, a doctoral student in Applied Linguistics at Ball State, and her faculty advisor, Mary Theresa Seig, Ph.D., are conducting the study on this bariatric program to see if patients actually learn more when they receive information through this multimedia program instead of by only reading complex documents.

Traditional patient education is often done through complex written documents, which, according to previous research, may not be the most effective way to ensure that learning occurs. Legal terminology is also often included as part of the informed consent process. However, patients also need to be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the procedures and the risks before making decisions.

“According to the American Medical Association, over a third of our population is lacking in functional health literacy,” said Renguette. “Many people do not understand complex medical information. We would like to see if this tool can help people better understand the complex material.”

To help increase comprehension, patients can review the Web-based program as many times as they like, share it with family or friends, or really get familiar with the content prior to surgery – all from the convenience of home. Once the patient has been approved for surgery, he or she can complete the informed consent process within the same program.

“We believe that sophisticated technology is a key component to education, healthier lifestyles and ultimately patient outcomes,” said Harlon J. Wilson, president and chief executive officer, Medical Animatics, LLC. “This research is part of our commitment to showing higher patient comprehension levels for our programs versus typical patient education.

According to the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS), weight loss surgery, also called bariatric surgery or gastric bypass surgery, limits the amount of food the stomach can hold by surgically reducing the stomach’s capacity to only a few ounces. In addition to reducing food intake, some weight loss surgeries alter the digestion process, which curbs the amount of calories and nutrients absorbed.

ASMBS estimates 205,000 people with morbid obesity in the U.S. had bariatric surgery in 2007. About 15 million people in the U.S. have morbid obesity; only 1% of the clinically eligible population is being treated for morbid obesity through bariatric surgery.

“Since one of the most important steps in weight loss surgery is getting and understanding a lot of information, we believe this tool will increase comprehension for our patients,” said Jack H. Ditslear III, M.D., medical director of Community Hospital North’s bariatric program. “We’re excited to see the research results so that we have firm data to confirm our beliefs.”

Medical Animatics collaborates with healthcare professionals to develop innovative, technology-based educational tools for patients, like the patient education and informed consent program on bariatric surgery.

Community’s comprehensive bariatric services include free surgical weight loss sessions for persons interested in learning more about bariatric surgery (presented by a board certified surgeon who is a member of the American Society of Bariatric Surgery (ASBS); multiple surgical options, including minimally invasive procedures; a personalized approach to patient care; insurance pre-certification and extensive pre-surgical education and screening; nutrition counseling; long-term follow up care post surgery; online support from bariatric staff and other patients; bi-monthly support groups; and a psychologist with more than 20 years of experience in weight management. In addition, patients are followed by the same surgeon throughout their bariatric experience for consistent care.

###

About Community Health Network

Ranked among the top 20 integrated health care networks in the nation, Community Health Network has more than 70 sites of care throughout central Indiana. This includes Community Hospitals East, North and South in Indianapolis and Community Hospital Anderson; The Indiana Heart Hospital, a dedicated heart hospital; Indiana Surgery Centers; Community Physicians of Indiana; Community Home Health Services; MedCheck urgent care centers and MEDPOINT

express convenience clinics; employer health services; nursing homes; and other health care facilities. Community Health Network is committed to getting you well and back to your life. For more information about Community Health Network or to find a physician, call 800-777-7775 or visit eCommunity.com.

About Medical Animatics, LLC

Medical Animatics is a multimedia technology firm specializing in the production of high-end 3D-animation, video, and application development for medical, health education, life sciences, and sports performance enhancement. Medical Animatics' surgical animation and state-of-the-art video production can be viewed in multimedia and web-based training products for patient education and electronic informed consent, in corporate training, K-12 distance education programming, public health education programming, and is used in Olympic sports performance enhancement training programs. For more information, visit www.medicalanimatics.com or dial (877) 284-2811.

For Medical Animatics, contact:

Debbie Davis
Triad Public Relations
(o) 317.595.0820
(c) 317.508.2179
triadpr@gmail.com

For Community Health Network, contact:

Lynda de Widt
Community Health Network
(o) 317.621.3636
(p) 317.904.8845
LdeWidt@eCommunity.com

For Ball State University, contact:

Corinne Renguette
Ph.D. Student, Applied Linguistics
Ball State University, Dept. of English
ccrenguette@bsu.edu

Mary Theresa Seig, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Applied Linguistics
Ball State University, Dept. of English
(o) 765.285.8443
mtseig@bsu.edu

Layne Cameron
Media Relations Manager
Ball State University
(o) 765.285.5953
(c) 765.748.4827
lscameron@bsu.edu