



## News Release

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### ***Baptist Health, Wolfson Children's Hospital Offer New Treatment Device for Stuttering in Northeast Florida***

#### **Dramatic Improvement in Fluency Achieved with SpeechEasy® Device**

*Jacksonville, Florida, April 12, 2006* – Wolfson Children's Hospital is one of seven locations in the state of Florida to offer the advanced SpeechEasy® fluency device for children and adolescents who stutter. Baptist Health Rehabilitation Services will offer the device for adults.

“Stuttering is a condition that can profoundly affect a person's life, in terms of their social and professional advancement,” said Judy Hammer-Knisely, MA, CCC/SLP-A, a speech language pathologist and licensed audiologist with Wolfson Children's Hospital Rehabilitation Services. “While not a ‘cure,’ SpeechEasy is a remarkable new treatment option that brings new hope to people who stutter.”

SpeechEasy devices were developed at a leading research university and are worn similar to a hearing aid. However, rather than amplify sound, they use a technology called “Altered Auditory Feedback” (AAF) to recreate a phenomenon called the choral effect. The choral effect, which has been documented within the scientific community for more than 45 years, occurs when people who stutter suddenly become fluent when they speak in unison with others, such as while singing in a choir or reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in a crowd. When someone wears a SpeechEasy device and speaks, their words are digitally replayed in their ear with a very slight delay and frequency modification. As a result, the brain perceives that it is speaking in unison with another person, which recreates the “choral effect,” thus reducing or even eliminating the stutter.

“We are excited to bring SpeechEasy to Northeast Florida and to help local people who stutter experience the heightened sense of confidence, freedom and self-reliance that comes from being able to communicate more effectively,” said Hammer-Knisely.

Outpatient clinic locations at Wolfson Children's Hospital and in Mandarin, Jacksonville Beach and Orange Park offer the SpeechEasy device to children 8

years of age and up, along with older teens and adults. Previously, patients were referred to Tampa and other Florida cities for the device.

“We expect that patients will come to our clinics from Orlando, Gainesville and Daytona Beach to get the device,” said Hammer-Knisely.

The device can be fitted behind the ear, within the ear or completely in the canal. It is fitted for the individual and has proven very effective for reading and conversation.

Stuttering is a disorder characterized by frequent repetitions, pauses and prolongations that interfere with the normal flow of speech. It affects more than three million Americans. Famous people who stutter have included Winston Churchill, Jimmy Stewart, Marilyn Monroe, James Earl Jones, Bruce Willis, John Stossel and Bill Walton.

For more information on the SpeechEasy device, please visit [www.speecheasy.com](http://www.speecheasy.com) or call Hammer-Knisely at 904.215.3324.

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*Baptist Health is a faith-based, mission-driven system comprised of Baptist Medical Center Downtown, Baptist Heart Hospital, Baptist Medical Center Beaches, Baptist Medical Center Nassau; Baptist Medical Center South and Wolfson Children's Hospital - Jacksonville's only children's hospital. Baptist Health also includes cardiology and cardiovascular surgery services, a comprehensive cancer center, orthopaedic institute, women's resource center, a full range of psychology and psychiatry services, outpatient facilities and a network of primary care physicians' offices throughout Northeast Florida. Baptist Health is the official healthcare provider for the Jacksonville Jaguars.*

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