

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

ROANOKE VALLEY RESIDENTS GET RELIEF FROM BACK PAIN THROUGH *mild* PROCEDURE

Roanoke Rapids, NC (June 6, 2013) - Halifax Regional anesthesiologist, and interventional pain management physician Joey Thomas, MD, is helping residents of the Roanoke Valley diagnosed with lumbar spinal stenosis (LSS) relieve pain and significantly improving their mobility.

Before her December 2012 *mild* procedure, Clara Walker experienced extreme back pain which prevented her from her accomplishing simple day-to-day activities. "I just wanted to lay down all the time with a heating pad," said Walker. Referred to Dr. Thomas from her Internist Dr. Mario G. Fiorilli, Walker says her recovery experience has gone smoothly. "I feel great! I don't hurt in my back," claims Walker. Having experienced first-hand the benefits of the *mild* procedure, Walker expressed "I recommend to anybody!"

Lumbar spinal stenosis (LSS) is a common condition, with more than 1.2 million patients diagnosed and in treatment nationwide each year. LSS is a narrowing of the lower spinal canal which may cause pain, numbness, or tingling in your lower back, legs or buttocks, limiting a person's ability to stand or walk. Usually, LSS is found in people over 50 years of age, and the likelihood of developing LSS increases as we age.

Known as "*mild*" it is a short, outpatient procedure, performed through a very small incision (about the size of a baby aspirin) that requires no general anesthesia, no implants, and no stitches and takes about an hour. The patient is under local anesthesia and light sedation. Under a scope, tiny tools go into the spinal canal and literally scoop out ligament and other tissue which tighten and thicken as we age.

Your spine provides support for your back and body. It also protects the spinal cord, the bundle of nerve tissues that run from your brain to your lower body. The bony column that encloses the spinal cord is called the spinal canal and is made up of ligaments, bones, and discs.

Due to natural wear and tear on the body as we age, there can be a number of factors that cause the narrowing of the spinal canal including, thickening of ligament tissue, overgrowth of bone (osteoarthritis), or bulging of the discs that create pressure on your spinal cord. This narrowing of the spinal canal is called spinal stenosis, and when it occurs in the lower part of the spine, the condition is called lumbar spinal stenosis.

The advantages the *mild* procedure provides patients are numerous. It can be performed in an outpatient setting by specially trained physicians, and the recovery time is shorter in comparison to the more invasive approach.

The procedure is generally performed in one to two hours, and patients return to work and other normal daily tasks within a few days. Post procedure rehabilitation options are also faster and less complicated, following *mild*.

Always in pursuit of new medical technology that will improve the lives of his patients, Dr. Thomas is the only anesthesiologist performing the “mild procedure” within Halifax and Northampton Counties. For those dealing with the pain, numbness, and limited mobility caused by LSS, his presents in the community has improved their quality of life. In the coming weeks, anesthesiologist, and pain management physician Dr. Glenn MacNichol will also be coming on board to perform the *mild* procedure.

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.

About mild® Procedure

mild® is a safe procedure that can help patients diagnosed with lumbar spinal stenosis (LSS) stand longer and walk farther with less pain. It is a short, outpatient procedure, performed through a very small incision (about the size of a baby aspirin) that requires no general anesthesia, no implants, and no stitches. Study data show that 79% of patients experience a significant reduction in pain and significant increase in mobility. In addition, the mild® procedure has been proven to have a very low risk of major complications.

About Dr. Joey Thomas

Dr. Thomas is an Anesthesiologist at Halifax Regional Medical Center. He is certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology and American Board of Pain Medicine. He has vast experience in interventional pain medicine and management of chronic pain. Dr. Thomas is a member of several societies including International Spine Intervention Society (ISIS) and American Academy of Pain Medicine. He specializes in nonsurgical spine Intervention and spinal injection techniques.