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**Heart of the Issue: Lee Health Surgeon Talks Opioids and Cardiovascular Health**

*Dr. Brian Hummel to Discuss Status and Health Challenges  
of Southwest Florida Opioid Crisis at Hazelden Betty Ford*

(Fort Myers, Fla. Jan. 25, 2019) Opioid and heart health take center stage Feb. 7 as Brian Hummel, M.D., a surgeon with Lee Health's Shipley Cardiothoracic Center, joins Brenda Iliff, executive director of Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation for an educational talk.

Dr. Hummel and Iliff will discuss how the opioid epidemic has touched all aspects of life for many in Southwest Florida, including their cardiovascular health, and how Lee Health is working to provide substance abuse resources for patients afflicted with drug-related endocarditis.

"Illegal use and abuse of opioids has a profound effect on the health and well-being of an individual. Infections can occur throughout the body including the heart, lungs, spine, brain, etc. The increasing number of patients has created a major problem not only in Southwest Florida but across the nation," said Dr. Hummel.

Endocarditis is an infection of the heart valves. It occurs when bacteria, fungi or other germs spread through a patient's bloodstream and attach to the valves of the heart. As these clusters of infection grow, they interfere with the functioning of the valves and can break loose and cause stroke or other organ damage. Intravenous drug users are particularly prone to this condition because they reuse/share needles or use contaminated solutions (i.e., muddy water) to prepare their drugs, injecting potentially harmful bacteria into the bloodstream. Many of these patients aren't aware or don't seek medical care until they are brought to the emergency department very ill.

At Lee Health, treatment for endocarditis requires a multi-week hospitalization where patients are given a steady stream of intravenous antibiotics to clear the infection. From there, if the infection does not respond to the antibiotics, surgeons at the Shipley Cardiothoracic Center replace the damaged heart valves. Approximately 30 percent of these patients return to the hospital within 30 days due to complications from resumed drug use.

Recovery for these patients also depends on community resources including Hazelden Betty Ford. The clinic is on the front lines of addiction treatment in Southwest Florida, offering multiple levels of addiction treatment programs and services.

If You Go:

Drug Addiction and the Heart

Thursday, Feb. 7 - 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Hazelden in Naples - 950 6th Ave N. Naples, FL 34102

Please RSVP by Monday, Feb. 4

For more information and to RSVP, Contact Community Programs Coordinator, Kristin Stubbs at [Kristin.Stubbs@LeeHealth.org](mailto:Kristin.Stubbs@LeeHealth.org).