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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Linda McGinity Jackson, Jewish Hospital  
502-587-4603

Kathy Keadle, University of Louisville  
502-852-7504

### SURGEONS UPDATE STATUS OF FIRST ABIOCOR PATIENT

No evidence of additional stroke, tracheotomy performed to help patient breathe

(LOUISVILLE) – Dr. Laman Gray and Dr. Rob Dowling, the University of Louisville surgeons who implanted the world’s first totally implantable replacement heart in Robert Tools at Jewish Hospital on July 2, announced today that Mr. Tools received a tracheotomy to help him breathe.

According to Dr. Lynn Simon, Mr. Tools’ neurologist, "strokes frequently cause problems with swallowing, which causes a build-up of secretions and leads to problems with airway management."

Dr. Simon said bleeding and swelling were also detected in a follow-up CT scan. The bleeding and swelling follow the normal progression of a stroke. "There was some hemorrhage into the original stroke, but there was no evidence of a new stroke," Dr. Simon said. "The small amount of hemorrhage was not unexpected with the kind of stroke that Mr. Tools had. I did not feel that there was a significant clinical change as a result of this development."

Dr. Gray added, "I feel his prognosis is guarded and it is too premature to make any speculation. However, Mr. Tools did not have an additional stroke. The bleeding and swelling he experienced is not uncommon after a stroke."

The tracheotomy procedure involves cutting a hole in the throat so that ventilator tubes can be inserted directly into the throat. The procedure allows physicians to remove the ventilator from Mr. Tools’ mouth to help make him more comfortable.

Mr. Tools experienced a stroke on Sunday afternoon, November 11. Following the stroke, Mr. Tools was returned to ventilator support in response to some respiratory distress Tuesday evening.

Mr. Tools’ family members are grateful for the prayers and good wishes they have received. Family members ask for continued prayers for his recovery.

Mr. Tools’ condition will continue to be evaluated clinically through CT scans and other medical procedures. Significant changes in his condition will be reported on the web site, [www.heartpioneers.org](http://www.heartpioneers.org).