

# Bay State Physicians Performed a Surgical First in State

SPRINGFIELD - Two Springfield surgeons were the first in Massachusetts to offer youngsters with pectus excavatum new hope in repairing the deformity through a new minimally invasive procedure.

Drs. Kevin P. Moriarty and Stanley H. Konefal, Jr. of Pediatric Surgical Services, Inc., performed the minimally invasive pectus excavatum repair—also called the Nuss procedure after the Virginia surgeon who pioneered it—in Massachusetts.

They first performed the procedure in April 1998 at Shriners Hospital in Springfield and with a second operation in December at Baystate Medical Center Children's Hospital.

Pectus excavatum, which occurs in approximately one out of every 400 children and becomes more pronounced in early adolescence, is a deformity that children are born with where the sternum is significantly recessed in their chest, which can render them with both pulmonary and cardiac symptoms.

"In addition to the physiological trauma associated with pectus excavatum, youngsters undergo a tremendous amount of psychological stress," said Dr. Moriarty.

"Because of the sunken hole the defect leaves in the middle of their chest, children are targets for ridicule and often do not participate in athletic sports because they have to take their shirts off," he added.

In the past, a lengthy invasive operation that lasted about four hours was required to

correct the deformity.

"We would have to reset rib cartilages, six or seven on either side, correct the

are not being resected and there is a smaller incision.

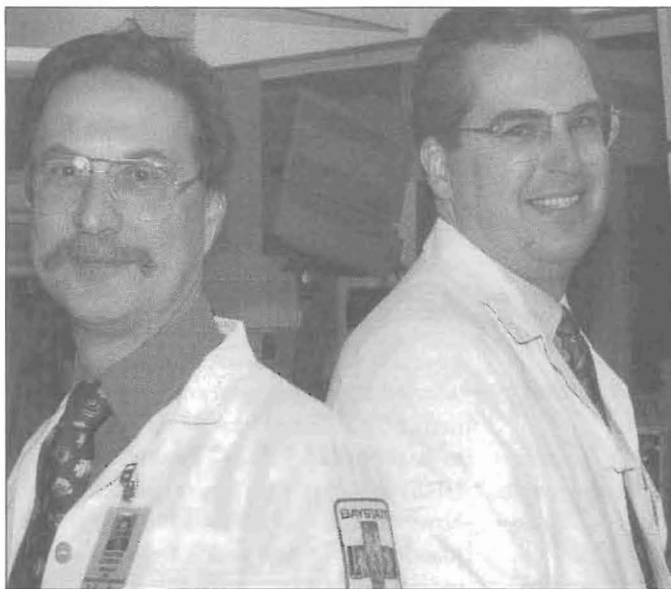
The minimally invasive procedure was

actually performed by Dr. Donald Nuss, a surgeon at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughter's in Norfolk, Va., about 10 years ago.

"We saw him present the 10-year-data on results at an American Pediatric Surgical Association meeting in May 1997 and it was eye opening," said Dr. Moriarty.

As a result, Dr. Konefal traveled to Norfolk to learn the procedure from Nuss and was and brought it back to Massachusetts to benefit other youngsters in the area with pectus excavatum.

Today, the doctors have successfully performed 14 of the Nuss procedures on youngsters since April 1998, and have even taught other surgeons how to perform the procedure. They recently were visiting professors at the Boston Floating Children's Hospital of New England Medical Center where they demonstrated the Nuss procedure to other pediatric surgeons. ✚



*Drs. Stanley H. Konefal, Jr., (at left) and Kevin P. Moriarty, of Pediatric Surgical Services, Inc., performed the minimally invasive pectus excavatum repair at Baystate Medical Center.*

sternum, and place a bar underneath, all through a six- to eight-inch incision made across the chest," said Dr. Moriarty.

The 90-minute minimally invasive technique, pioneered by Nuss, places a bar under the sternum—now entered through two small incisions under the arms—to remold the chest wall by applying an outward force to the sternum. The new technique leaves no visible scar in the middle of the chest. In younger patients, it offers a quicker recovery time because cartilages