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## **New MUSC procedure treats damaged esophagus**

The Medical University of Charleston is now the first and only hospital in South Carolina to offer patients a new tool to treat Barrett's esophagus, a precancerous condition of the esophagus caused by chronic GERD (reflux).

Barrett's esophagus occurs when GERD causes the cells lining the esophagus to undergo genetic changes that can set the stage for cancer development.

Barrett's affects approximately 3.3 million Americans and if left untreated, it can lead to a dangerous type of cancer called esophageal adenocarcinoma. This is the most rapidly rising cancer in the U.S., increasing faster than breast cancer, prostate cancer, or melanoma. Approximately 15,000 Americans will be diagnosed with esophageal cancer in 2006, and more than 95 percent of them will die.

MUSC is also one of 17 medical centers nationally participating in a study trial comparing two treatment options for Barrett's esophagus. **Dr. Rob Hawes**, included in this select group of specialists, will compare radio frequency (RF) ablation therapy using the **HALO360 System**-a procedure which removes the diseased tissue and allows for the re-growth of normal cells-against the current standard of care, i.e., regular endoscopic biopsy surveillance and appropriate medical management of associated acid reflux disease.