



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Guidant Announces Opening of Virtual Reality Physician Training Facility.

Physicians Practice New Interventional Procedure in a Virtual Environment

**Indianapolis, Ind. and Brussels, Belgium - March 19, 2002** - Guidant Corporation (NYSE and PXC: GDT), a world leader in the treatment of cardiovascular and vascular disease, today announced that the Guidant Europe Cardiac and Vascular Institute, based in Brussels, has opened its virtual reality training facility for physicians.

The unique training system was exclusively developed for Guidant by Mentice, a pioneer and leader in clinical education systems utilizing the latest virtual reality simulation technologies.

Guidant's new virtual reality system is a simulator for catheter-based procedures such as stent placement, balloon angioplasty and coronary sinus lead placement required for cardiac resynchronization therapy. The newly opened facility allows for eight simultaneous sessions allowing physicians to practice cases and share their experiences in a natural learning environment.

"This system provides a remarkably realistic tactile and visual simulation of interventional procedures allowing physicians to practice new therapeutic techniques in a virtual environment," said Guido Neels, president, Guidant Europe. "Our investment in this important training tool demonstrates Guidant's commitment to clinical excellence and education."

Training sessions at the Guidant Europe Cardiovascular Institute are designed and moderated by experts with extensive practical clinical experience and proven teaching competency. These experts also make sure that the latest advances are incorporated into the institutes programs.

"Innovation and learning go hand in hand at the Cardiovascular Institute," said Professor Jean Marco, Clinique Pasteur, Toulouse, France. "With the virtual reality system the stenting procedure looks and feels remarkably similar to a real case - but without putting actual patients at risk or using animals for training. Interventional techniques can be practiced again and again at increasing levels of difficulty in a virtual cath-lab environment," continued Professor Marco.

Martin Schalijs, M.D., Leiden University Medical Center, the Netherlands, an experienced implanter of cardiac resynchronization devices for patients with heart failure noted, "This virtual reality system allows physicians to get past the learning curve with the over-the-wire lead system much faster and without the discomforts that come with a cath-lab environment, such as exposure to radiation and time constraints. In a matter of hours on the simulator, practical experience is cumulated that otherwise would take numerous procedures," continued Dr. Schalijs.

Based in Gothenburg, Sweden, Mentice provides turnkey solutions - including hardware, software and technical support - from entry-level skills acquisition to high-fidelity procedural training. With its range of products in the endovascular, laparoscopy and arthroscopy areas, Mentice has established a new benchmark for minimally invasive surgical simulation. Mentice has sold and installed more than 150 of its systems worldwide. For more information, visit [www.mentice.com](http://www.mentice.com).

Guidant Corporation pioneers lifesaving technology, giving an opportunity for better life today to 8 million cardiac and vascular patients worldwide. The company, driven by a strong entrepreneurial culture of more than 10,000 employees, develops, manufactures and markets a broad array of products and services that enable less invasive care for some of life's most threatening medical conditions. For more information visit [www.guidant.com](http://www.guidant.com).