



# NO MORE RUNNY NOSE

story by **Kelsey Sunderman-Foster** photos by **John Stricklin**

## Local Balloon Sinuplasty pioneer debuts new concept



**D**r. Raymond Weiss is considered to be one of the pioneers of his field, and for good reason. Balloon Sinuplasty, a procedure that enlarges the sinus opening using a small balloon, has become a standard of care within the past decade. Prior to the development of Balloon Sinuplasty, the process of dealing with the effects of chronic sinusitis and permanently improving sinus drainage was much more invasive, requiring more drastic measures to reshape the sinus cavity. After the process was developed, Dr. Weiss became the second doctor to perform the procedure. At this stage, he remains the longest actively practicing Balloon Sinuplasty surgeon in the world. As with any new innovation,

Dr. Weiss and others who were developing the procedure were met with some resistance. "What was different about this process was that it wasn't in line with any of the things we'd done before in ENT (otorhinolaryngology, or an acronym for ears, nose and throat)," he said. "This was totally transformational, and if you totally break the paradigm that can be hard for people to accept." For ENT professionals, the development of a new method of care posed both an opportunity and a challenge. "Many times they are concerned by the introduction of a new device or procedure, and they'll fight tooth and nail because they don't want to have to start over and potentially not be at the same level of experience they were at before," Dr. Weiss said.

"I've had patients who are now a year out and still have no reduction in the improvement of their symptoms following Clarifix."

**Dr. Raymond Weiss**

After seeing the results of the process, medical professionals ultimately saw that this big change was for the better, especially for the patients. "This procedure could be done less invasively and less expensively while getting results that were just as good if not better," said Dr. Weiss. Today, Balloon Sinuplasty has become a standard of care within the medical field.

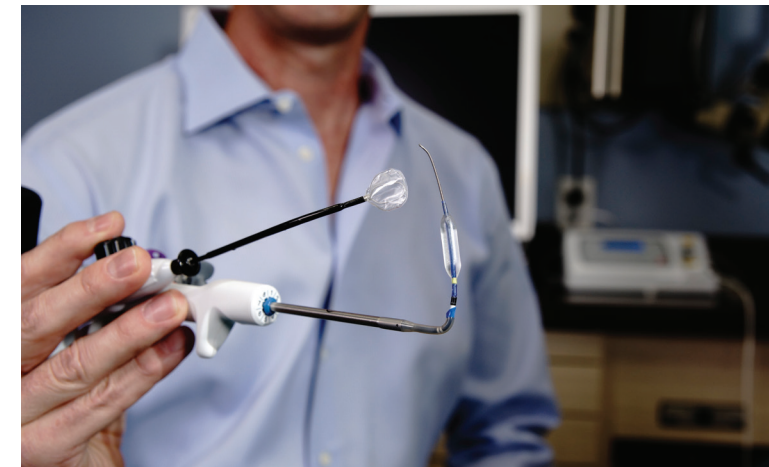
Since his involvement with the development of Balloon Sinuplasty, Dr. Weiss has become affiliated with a variety of startup companies. "I started working with Arrinex Inc. about three years ago," he said. "The founder already had an idea in place based on some research showing that what patients complain about the most is a runny nose. We wanted to look at those who experience a runny nose despite medicine and ask ourselves what we could do at that stage."

The group found a category of patients who have a runny nose due to nerve involvement or nerve reflex, and determined that the nerve could be addressed with medicine or with a device that could alter the firing of the nerve. "It had been shown about 40 years ago with some research that you could actually freeze that nerve, changing the way it fired and eliminating the issue of a runny nose," Dr. Weiss continued. "However, 40 years ago they didn't have the devices to do much with that initial research."

The device they developed was FDA approved a few months ago and is commercializing now. "For now it'll only be a limited release, so there are only a few areas of the country that will have access to it for the first year," said Dr. Weiss. "The exciting thing is that the initial study has been completed and was presented at the American Rhinology Society."

The initial group of patients experienced a dramatic improvement in the amount of runny noses and congestion they experienced. After six months, the patients had experienced no degradation. "Since then, I've had patients who are now a year out and still have no reduction in the improvement of their symptoms following Clarifix. We're hoping to get two to four years or maybe even longer out of the procedure."

"The world has changed to the point that whether you're in medicine or business, or even if you're an artist or writer, you can be a very important addition to our society and to the world from right here on the Coast. You don't have to live in New York to make a difference. There are some unbelievably great things that have come from the Coast, and I'm very proud of the fact that we produced really good research, despite the unbelievably strong scrutiny that was put on us."



**ABOVE: Clarifix and Balloon Sinuplasty devices. BELOW TOP: Clarifix device during cryotherapy freeze. BELOW BOTTOM: DR. RAYMOND WEISS prepares to perform the Clarifix procedure on Terrie Gill.**

