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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### International Experts Release Updated Guidelines for the Effective Use of Cardiac Ultrasound Enhancing Agents

Durham, NC, March 1, 2018 – Imaging experts from the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) today released a paper, [\*Clinical Applications of Ultrasonic Enhancing Agents in Echocardiography: 2018 American Society of Echocardiography Guidelines Update\*](#), to provide guidance for clinicians on the expanding utility of ultrasound enhancing agents (UEAs), also known as contrast media, in medical imaging. This new guideline aims to update the previous 2008 consensus document, and encourage the appropriate use of UEAs in patient testing, particularly in new and growing areas of cardiovascular care. The document has been endorsed by 11 national echocardiographic and anesthesiology societies outside of the United States.

The writing group for this updated guideline was chaired by Thomas R. Porter, MD, FASE, the Theodore F. Hubbard Distinguished Chair of Cardiology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, in Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to Dr. Porter, the document was written by a group of geographically diverse experts, including experts from Canada, Brazil, Italy, and the UK, to assist in making the recommendations relevant worldwide. Dr. Porter noted that “there have been several significant developments since the 2008 consensus paper was published. The clinical applications for UEAs have greatly expanded in the past decade, with large clinical trials published demonstrating their safety and efficacy. This has allowed us to put forth specific recommendations based on level of evidence (LOE) for their use in both resting and stress echocardiography.”

For example, the document gives a specific Class I LOE A recommendation for UEA use for left ventricular opacification (LVO) whenever endocardial border delineation is needed but inadequate for either resting or stress echocardiography. Furthermore, it includes specific recommendations for how to optimize LVO with multi-pulse sequences, and a table that provides details about optimization for LVO on various ultrasound machines from many of the major manufacturers.

While UEAs have been commercially available for more than two decades, it is estimated that less than 10 percent of all echocardiograms utilize this valuable tool, despite the fact that at least 30% of all echoes are believed to be sub-optimal and would benefit from enhancement. This is especially true in patients being evaluated for chest pain or during stress echocardiography. UEAs are underutilized today for a wide variety of reasons; both patients and clinicians are often reluctant to use ultrasound enhancing agents because they mistakenly associate it with the contrast agents used for computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). While those “classic” contrast agents use ionizing radiation and nephrotoxic agents, UEAs do not contain either of these, and have a very low incidence of harmful side effects or adverse events.

According to Dr. Porter, this paper “will help both academic, cutting-edge practitioners and those in community settings to better utilize UEAs by providing important information on the safety and efficacy of ultrasound enhancement in a wide variety of clinical situations. It also provides guidelines on how to optimize contrast detection with very low mechanical index imaging techniques. This will enable sonographers and cardiologists to work with their administrators to develop standard operating procedures for UEA use.”

In conjunction with the publication of the guideline document, Dr. Porter will conduct a live webinar, including a question and answer section, on April 19, 2018 at 1:00 PM ET, which will be available at no cost to all ASE members and open to all other clinicians for the low fee of \$25. This webinar, and all ASE-hosted web sessions, are archived on [ASEUniversity.org](http://ASEUniversity.org) to facilitate education for those who cannot attend the live webcast.

The full guideline document is available on the *Journal of American Society of Echocardiography* (JASE) website ([OnlineJASE.com](http://OnlineJASE.com)). This document and all ASE Guideline documents are also available to the medical community at [ASEcho.org/Guidelines](http://ASEcho.org/Guidelines).

*As the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging, the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) is the leader and advocate, setting practice standards and guidelines. Comprised of over 17,000 physicians, sonographers, nurses, and scientists, ASE is a strong voice providing guidance, expertise, and education to its members with a commitment to improving the practice of ultrasound and imaging of the heart and cardiovascular system for better patient outcomes. For more information about ASE, visit [ASEcho.org](http://ASEcho.org) or ASE’s public information site, [SeeMyHeart.org](http://SeeMyHeart.org).*

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