

## TAKING THE LEAD IN ATRESIA REPAIR



In 2006 the California Ear Institute defined itself as a leading center for Atresia repair. Over 60 patients from 14 states and 4 countries sought our expertise and attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual “Surgical Options for Atresia and Microtia” conference where they heard first hand from the most experienced surgeons in the world about how they could benefit from a highly specialized surgical procedure known as “Atresia Repair.” Atresia is the absence of an ear canal. Usually, children with Atresia have normal inner ear hearing structures. Often the atresia repair results in the child being able to achieve normal levels of hearing without the use of amplification. CEI surgeons perform the largest number of atresia repair surgeries in the Western United States.

Our appeal to children and families from across the United States and from across the globe is the panel of experts we are proud to work alongside. Frequently, an outer ear malformation called Microtia



is associated with Atresia, and a series of surgeries must be carefully coordinated for optimal results. CEI has worked for over 20 years in tandem with Dr. Burt Brent and Dr. John Reinisch in performing both major approaches to outer ear reconstruction for affected children and adults. Technological advances now mean that surgery can start as early as age 3, rather than waiting until age 8-10 as was necessary as recently as fifteen years ago. This provides the benefit of being able to fully restore a child’s hearing and correct the outer ear deformity before a child begins kindergarten.

Patients with atresia have benefited from the efforts of the Let Them Hear Foundation’s Insurance Advocacy Program. Frequently, insurers attempt to restrict which surgeons they will pay for or claim that the surgery is cosmetic in an attempt to reduce costs, resulting in much poorer results to patients. The Advocacy program provides appeal services free of charge to patients



whose insurance companies have denied coverage. The program has been 100% successful in all Atresia repair appeals thus expanding the number of individuals who can benefit from this procedure and who seek our medical expertise.

In 2007 we expect even greater growth in the number of Atresia repair surgeries performed at our center. With patients from Korea, China, Mexico, and Canada in 2006 our expectation seems promising. We look forward to serving and improving the lives of individuals with Atresia and Microtia in the coming year.

For more information on Atresia and Microtia or the Advocacy program, please visit our websites, [www.californiaearinstitute.com](http://www.californiaearinstitute.com) and [www.letthemhear.org](http://www.letthemhear.org).

