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(54) Title: EXPANDABLE SHEATH AND METHODS OF USING THE SAME

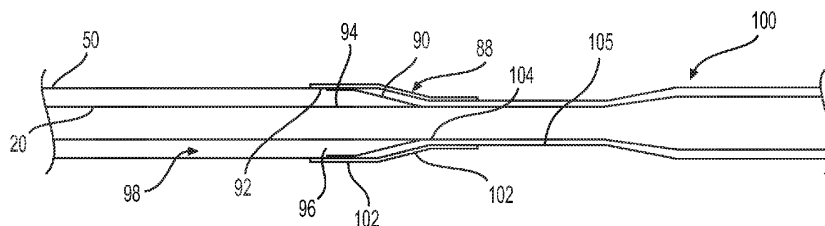


FIG. 14

(57) Abstract: Disclosed herein are expandable introducer sheaths and methods of making and using the same. The sheaths minimize trauma to a patient's vasculature by allowing for temporary expansion of a portion of the sheath to accommodate passage of a delivery system for an implant, then return to a non-expanded state after the passage of the device. The sheath includes a foldable inner member having a detached flap structure at its distal tip that facilitates expansion of the sheath lumen to increased diameters, and an elastomeric distal end that reduces push and retrieval forces therethrough. The sheath can include a hemostasis seal on its proximal end to prevent the leakage of blood out of the sheath and prevent ballooning of outer layer of the sheath.

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