RARE FORM OF HEART DISEASE IN A CAT

This pretty kitty is Star. She belongs to a Best Friends team member. Star has a tooth with a resorptive lesion that needed to be extracted so she came in on Monday for dental work. A pre-anesthetic ECG screen showed an abnormal heart rhythm that would make anesthesia extremely dangerous. We canceled her procedure.

The abnormality Star has is called AV block. The electrical signal that tells the heart to beat is not making it from the pacemaker node to the heart muscle so her heart isn't beating at a normal rate. She has no symptoms of fainting or tiring at this point. If symptoms develop, she will need a pacemaker implanted. We bet you didn't know that used human pacemakers are resterilized and refurbished for use in dogs and cats! If she needs one she will go to the veterinary school in Madison to have it implanted. Hopefully that won't be necessary. Unfortunately, anesthesia is out of the question until/unless Star gets a pacemaker. She will have to be on long term pain medication for her bad tooth since it isn't safe for us to extract it under anesthesia.