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Swedish Medical Center Adds Two New da Vinci Surgical Systems to Support Robot-Assisted Surgical Team

SEATTLE, Wash. – September 3, 2009 – Swedish Medical Center today announced the addition of two latest-generation da Vinci Surgical System robots to advance its pioneering use of robot-assisted surgeries for patients. Swedish will use the two new da Vinci Si HD system robots to provide surgeons with more precision and dexterity over existing surgical approaches, helping improve the patient treatment and recovery process.

As one of the first medical centers in the region to perform robot-assisted surgery, Swedish Medical Center is home to the fastest-growing and most experienced robot-assisted surgical program in the Pacific Northwest. The multidisciplinary robot-assisted surgical program was first established at Swedish in 2005. Since then, Swedish-affiliated surgeons have performed more than 2,000 procedures using the da Vinci Surgical System, more than any other robot-assisted surgical program in the Pacific Northwest.

Currently, Swedish-affiliated surgeons are using the da Vinci Surgical System from Sunnyvale, Calif.-based Intuitive Surgical Inc. to perform minimally invasive urological, gynecological and thoracic surgeries for diseases such as prostate cancer, kidney cancer, uterine cancer, cervical cancer, ovarian cancer and lung cancer, and to assist in complex gynecologic reconstruction surgeries.

“Using the latest da Vinci robotic technology represents another remarkable step forward in transforming the surgical experience for both patients and surgeons alike,” said Dr. James Porter, medical director of robot-assisted surgery at Swedish Medical Center, who performs both laparoscopic and robot-assisted urologic surgeries at Swedish’s First Hill campus. “Being a former prostate cancer patient who has undergone a da Vinci Prostatectomy, I have experienced firsthand the benefits of this surgical approach in improving the standard of care for patients.”

Longstanding Experience and Innovation in Robot-Assisted Surgery

As a patient selecting a treatment plan, the experience of the medical staff should be a top priority.

- *Urology experience:* The Swedish urology team is the most experienced urologic robot-assisted surgery group in the Northwest, performing more than 1,000 robot-assisted procedures since the technology was invented.
- *Gynecology experience:* Swedish-affiliated gynecologic surgeons at Pacific Gynecology Specialists were the first in the Northwest to offer robot-assisted surgery for women’s cancer. The team has performed the most robot-assisted surgeries on the West Coast and is second for most procedures performed in the United States, reaching nearly 1,000 surgeries.

Swedish continues to demonstrate innovation in patient care and treatments. It is the first in the region to perform a robotic lobectomy (removal of a lung) and is the first in Seattle to perform robot-assisted thoracic (chest) surgery. A surgeon in the urology group was also the first in the country to perform a retroperineal robot-assisted partial nephrectomy (removal of a kidney tumor).

“The depth and experience that these surgeons have gained over the last several years have positioned Swedish as a global leader in robotic surgery,” said Cal Knight, president and chief operating officer at Swedish Medical Center. “Surgeons from all over the world fly to Seattle to train and learn from our Swedish doctors.”

The new robots offer Swedish doctors a dual-console set-up, which will allow for greater collaboration among surgeons and enhance training capabilities for the program. The robot-assisted surgery program at Swedish is also among the first in the region to create a robotic training program for fellows.

Benefits of Robot-Assisted da Vinci Surgery

Minimally invasive robot-assisted surgery using the da Vinci technology can offer patients significant benefits over traditional surgical approaches, including less pain, less blood loss, shorter hospital stay, less risk of infection, less blood loss, faster recovery time and quicker return to normal daily activities.

“I was released from the hospital just one day after my prostatectomy,” said Len Roughgarden, a prostate cancer survivor who was treated with a robot-assisted surgery to remove his prostate at Swedish Medical Center. “Within a week, I returned to my normal routine including walking four miles each day and hiking mountains. The operation was painless, and I had not taken a Tylenol throughout the entire process. With the availability of robot-assisted surgery and the benefits it provides for patients, I don’t know why anyone would risk an open operation.”

By providing surgeons with dramatically improved visualization, enhanced dexterity, greater precision and ergonomic comfort, the da Vinci Surgical System makes it possible for more surgeons to perform minimally invasive procedures in a manner never before experienced.

Latest-Generation da Vinci Robotic Technology

Using state-of-the-art technology, the da Vinci Surgical System provides a precise way to help a trained surgeon use finely controlled robotic instruments to perform minimally invasive procedures more safely, while speeding patient recovery. Minimally invasive surgery is performed through dime-sized (1-2 cm) incisions in contrast to the much larger incisions used in traditional, open surgery, which are often as large as 6-12 inches long. Surgeons control every aspect of the procedure with the assistance of the da Vinci robotic platform.

The da Vinci Surgical System allows for numerous improvements over conventional laparoscopy, in which the surgeon operates while standing using hand-held, long-shafted instruments which have no wrists. With conventional laparoscopy, the surgeon must look up and away from the instruments, to a nearby 2D video monitor to see an image of the target anatomy. The surgeon must also rely on his/her patient-side assistant to position the camera correctly. In contrast, the da Vinci System’s ergonomic, intuitive design allows the surgeon to operate from a comfortable, seated position at the console, controlling a high-resolution camera and micro-surgical instruments to precisely guide the robotic arms.

The latest da Vinci System at Swedish consists of an ergonomic surgeon’s console, a patient-side cart with four interactive robotic arms, a high-performance 3D HD vision system and EndoWrist instruments that allow surgeons to work more precisely than in conventional surgery. Unlike traditional laparoscopic micro-instruments, da Vinci instruments have a patented EndoWrist that can turn 540 degrees, allowing for much finer movements. The da Vinci System is designed to seamlessly translate the surgeon's hand movements into more precise movements of the EndoWrist instruments to “virtually” put the surgeon’s hands inside the patient. A special 3D HD, dual-lens endoscope provides a highly magnified view of the surgical site inside the patient, allowing surgeons to see the surgical site up to 12-times more closely than human vision allows.

About Swedish Medical Center

Swedish Medical Center is the largest, most comprehensive, nonprofit health-care provider in the Greater Seattle area. It is comprised of three hospital campuses (First Hill, Cherry Hill and Ballard), a freestanding emergency room and specialty center in Issaquah, Swedish Home Care Services and Swedish Physicians – a network of 12 primary-care clinics. In addition to general medical and surgical care, Swedish is known as a regional referral center, providing specialized treatment in areas such as neurological care, cardiovascular care, oncology, orthopedics, high-risk obstetrics, pediatrics, organ transplantation and clinical research. For more information, visit www.swedish.org. For more information on the da Vinci robot, visit: http://www.intuitivesurgical.com/products/davinci_si_surgicalsystem/index.aspx.

To find more information about each of the Swedish Medical Center robot-assisted surgical team members, visit their individual practice Web sites:

- Pacific Gynecology Specialists: <http://www.pacificgyn.com/>
- Seattle Urological Associates: <http://www.seattleuro.com/>
- Swedish Urology Group: <http://www.swedishurology.com/>

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