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SAINT FRANCIS MEDICAL CENTER

Robotic Surgery Introduced to Downstate Illinois

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Peoria, Ill. – For the first time, robotic-assisted surgery is being performed in a downstate Illinois hospital. Members of the Peoria Surgical Group, including Drs. Thomas Rossi and David Crawford, have begun using the da Vinci Surgical System at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center. The announcement was made at a news conference held at the medical center. The da Vinci system, from California-based Intuitive Surgical, Inc., was approved for use in general laproscopic surgeries by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in July 2000.

According to Rossi, a major advantage is precision. “More precision in dissection and sewing comes with the technology,” he said. “This is precision that is difficult to duplicate with the human hand.” The procedures began at OSF Saint Francis in late August.

The system involves a dual lens optical system that permits 3-D visualization. The console is positioned a few feet from the patient. The surgeon is seated at a console with both hands working in tandem and arms comfortably supported. The movements of the instruments on the robotic arms are transmitted electromechanically. The movements the surgeon makes are interpreted by a computer and then applied to the robot.

“The result is less fatigue for the surgeon with a greater ability to suture, dissect and manipulate tissue,” said Crawford. “As with most innovations, the patient is the ultimate beneficiary.”

The instruments that accompany the da Vinci system reproduce exact movements of the human hands, wrists and fingers. The instruments can be autoclaved and thus used multiple times.