

June 16, 2006

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Bradenton Man First in Southeast U.S. to Undergo Robotically Assisted Surgery with da Vinci-S Robot

SARASOTA (June 16,2006) – As a software engineer who has programmed computers since the age of 15, Thomas Miles understands the capabilities of new technology more than most. So it was without hesitation that he became the first man in the southeast United States to undergo surgery with the new da Vinci-S robot on Thursday.

Sarasota Memorial is the first hospital in Florida – and among the first in the nation – to acquire the [da Vinci-S Surgical System](#), introduced to the world market early this year. The robot provides surgeons with unparalleled precision, dexterity and control in minimally invasive heart and cancer surgery.

“When I learned I had prostate cancer, I did my research and decided right away that I wanted to do it with the robot,” Miles, 57, said before being released from the hospital on Friday, just one day after his operation. “The advantages over traditional surgery and even laparoscopic were pretty clear.”

In the case of prostate and uterine cancer patients, studies suggest that the da Vinci robot offers improved cancer control and a lower incidence of impotence and urinary incontinence. In the case of heart patients, it allows doctors to repair the heart through small holes in the chest without any large chest incisions or cuts to the ribs or breastbone.

In general, robotically assisted minimally invasive procedures result in shorter hospital stays (patients recover from the surgery in days rather than weeks), less pain and scarring, less risk of infection, less blood loss and fewer transfusions, faster recovery and quicker return to normal activities, said Tracy Gapin, MD, the urologist and surgeon who performed Miles’ procedure.

Gapin, of Florida Urology Specialists, is one of six Sarasota Memorial surgeons who have completed or are in the process of completing their training to use the da Vinci robot. Other Sarasota Memorial surgeons who will be operating with the robot include:

- Urologist Joseph Bilik, MD, also of Florida Urology Specialists, Sarasota
- Urologists Robert Carey, MD, and Joshua Green, MD, of Urology Treatment Center, Sarasota
- Gynecological Oncologist James Fiorica, MD, Sarasota Memorial First Physicians Group
- Cardiac Surgeon Clifton Lewis, MD, of Sarasota Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgical Associates

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The da Vinci System is operated by a surgeon sitting a few feet away from the patient at a computerized console. Using a high-powered camera and remote controls, the surgeon guides the robot's four arms, which hold surgical tools inserted into the patient through small, keyhole-sized incisions. The robot's highly accurate instruments allow the surgeon to move his own hands – and the robot's – to conduct precise movements with extraordinary control and precision. In addition, da Vinci's video monitoring system provides a three-dimensional view of the surgery with magnification ten times that of the naked eye.

The da Vinci-S is the more advanced model of Intuitive Surgical System's original da Vinci robot, first approved by the FDA in 2000 for general laparoscopic surgery; in the past few years, the FDA has expanded the robot's application to provide patients with minimally invasive alternatives to open heart surgery (vessel bypass and valve repairs), and surgery for prostate and uterine cancer.

The Sarasota County Public Hospital Board voted unanimously in March to purchase the \$1.4 million robot to ensure people in this community have access to the less invasive, cutting edge treatment for many heart and cancer surgeries. The Sarasota Memorial Healthcare Foundation, Inc. contributed \$400,000 in private donations to help purchase the robot.

“Our physicians and hospital leaders are committed to offering this community the same level of expertise and advanced technology that you would find in the nation's top academic medical centers,” said Sarasota Memorial CEO Gwen MacKenzie. “The da Vinci robot is an example of that commitment.”

The timing was right for Thomas Miles, who was diagnosed with early stage prostate cancer in March. He decided to wait for Dr. Gapin to complete his training so that he could have the robotically assisted laparoscopic radical prostatectomy close to home with the doctor he knows and trusts.

“I chose the surgical route because I wanted the cancer out completely ... I didn't want to deal with the uncertainty of radiation and chemotherapy,” Miles said. “I chose the robot because of the nerve sparing aspects and the ten times 3D magnification it provides. I knew it would give me the best chance of getting all of the cancer out and sparing as much healthy nerves as possible.”

About Sarasota Memorial

Sarasota Memorial Hospital is an 826-bed regional medical center. It has been listed by U.S. News & World Report in the nation's 50 best hospitals in seven specialties: heart care and heart surgery, orthopedics, digestive disorders, cancer care, urology, geriatrics and ear, nose and throat care. U.S. News assessed care in more than 6,000 hospitals nationwide to determine the rankings. Just 176 hospitals scored high enough this year to rank in even a single specialty. The hospital also is the only hospital in the region with Magnet Nursing Services Recognition – the nation's highest honor for excellence in nursing. For information, visit smh.com

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