



ST. ROSE'S THIRD DA VINCI XI SUPPORTED BY DONORS

St. Rose Dominican Hospitals installed its third da Vinci XI robot-assisted operating system amid the initial wave of COVID-19. Surgeon Ashlee Justice, M.D., considers the timing of that acquisition, backed by donor support, significant to the growth of the hospital's robotics program and to providing high caliber care amid the pandemic.

WHY IT WAS – AND IS – IMPORTANT

As COVID-19 cases surged in southern Nevada, St. Rose took steps to limit the rate of infection among patients and hospital staff. One such step was delaying elective procedures such as joint replacements and reconstructive surgeries. Although that negatively impacted hospital revenues, Dr. Justice, who completed a general surgery residency with an emphasis in trauma and robotic surgeries, notes an upside.

“Our third da Vinci XI was purchased as part of strategic plans to increase St. Rose's use of robotic-assistance in emergency situations,” says Dr. Justice. “While we had begun using robotics in emergency situations before the pandemic, COVID-19 is increasing surgeon interest in that effort.”

The benefits of surgical robotics – which includes lower rates of hospital-acquired infection among surgical patients – are well documented. Yet, in the United States, the use of such advanced technology has been limited, almost exclusively, to elective procedures. That is rapidly changing.

As elective surgeries were postponed across the nation,

surgeons more routinely turned to robotic surgery systems to perform procedures that could not be delayed. “When a patient needs an emergency appendectomy or gallbladder removal, I am confident that the patient's risk of infection will be reduced by using the da Vinci XI,” says Dr. Justice.

When performing robotic-assisted surgery, there is a socially safe distance between the surgical table and the da Vinci XI's console Dr. Justice sits at. A high-definition, 3D monitor optimizes her view of the patient's anatomy. As she moves the system's controls, the advanced technology translates her hand movements to tiny surgical instruments attached to slim robotic arms in real time. The robotic-assisted da Vinci XI allows Dr. Justice to make smaller surgical incisions, and more nimbly access and operate on diseased or injured anatomy than if she performed the surgery through an open (traditional) procedure. With less disruption to the surrounding tissue and organs, the patient's infection risk is typically reduced because their healing time and hospital stay is generally shorter.

“COVID-19 is pushing hospitals and medical teams to invest in and learn to use the latest, safest surgical technologies,” says Dr. Justice. St. Rose's commitment to surgical robotics has put the hospital and its surgical teams ahead of that curve.

To learn more about supporting surgical robotics at the Siena or San Martín hospitals, call the Health Foundation at 702-616-4545 or visit supportstrose.org.