

# Lawnwood's new surgical system deemed a success

By PHILIP GRECH

For Hometown News

FORT PIERCE — A state-of-the-art robotic system for prostate surgeries has already proven to be a success at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center and Heart Institute in Fort Pierce.

The hospital purchased the da Vinci Surgical System for \$1.2 million in June 2005, and has already performed five procedures.

"The day after surgery I was walking, and the second day I was home," said Francisco Ramos of Port St. Lucie, the first patient operated on with the da Vinci Surgical System, in September.

"When I left the hospital

I took my last painkiller," he added.

The system provides a three-dimensional view of the prostate as the surgeon sits away from the patient at a console directing the robot. The surgeon controls the robot's three arms with hand controls that execute the procedure.

A binocular camera allows greater surgical precision and a finer degree of accuracy by providing a crisp, high-resolution image.

Hospital officials say the surgical system, named for 15th century Italian artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci, offers numerous benefits over the traditional invasive surgeries used to deal with localized

"The day after surgery I was walking."

**Francisco Ramos**  
Lawnwood patient

prostate cancer. They include shorter hospital stays, reduced pain and scarring, lower risk of infection and tissue damage, less blood loss and fewer blood transfusions. Physicians have also noted fewer complications, faster recoveries and a more rapid return to normal activities.

Common treatments for prostate cancer include surgery and radiation therapy. Traditional surgery involves larger

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incisions and may result in increased blood loss, longer hospital stays and the risk of complications such as impotence and incontinence. Radiation does not remove all the

cancer and further treatment is usually needed to stop cancer growth.

"What we want the community to know is that this is part of our commitment to bringing world-class healthcare to this region," said Beth Williams, director of

public relations and marketing at Lawnwood.

Two local surgeons, Dr. Adam Ball and Dr. Scott Van Appledorn, were recruited by Lawnwood to perform prostatectomies with the system. Both are trained in robotic-assisted surgery, and are partners

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at Gulfstream Urology Associates in Fort Pierce.

"We are now seeing patients from not only across the state, but from international countries who are interested in coming to Fort Pierce to have their prostate cancer surgery performed," Dr.

Van Appledorn said.

"I think that's going to be a big boon for the hospital as well as the reputation of the community."

Before Lawnwood obtained the da Vinci Surgical System, the closest hospitals using the robotic system were in

Orlando and Jacksonville.

The da Vinci system was developed by Intuitive Surgical Inc., of Mountain View, Calif.

For more information on the da Vinci Surgical System call Gulfstream Urology Associates at (772) 465-2020.