

### **Mobile robots offer 24/7 care to neurosurgical ICU, stroke patients**

HOUSTON—(Nov. 13, 2006)—Two nearly 6-foot tall, remote-controlled robots are now on staff at The Methodist Hospital, caring for critically ill patients suffering from stroke or other neurological problems.

Methodist's neurosurgical-ICU (NICU) and Eddy Scurlock Stroke Center are the first in Houston to use this wireless robotic technology to help provide 24/7 coverage for patients, giving them immediate access to a physician. The Remote Presence technology is part of a larger patient safety and quality initiative within The Methodist Hospital System.

The blue and black robots, nicknamed MURDOC (Mobile Unit Robot Doctor) and ROHAS (Remote Operated Health Assessment System), travel up to 2 mph, can be easily steered down a hallway or alongside a patient bed, and are equipped with infrared sensors to help the physician navigate. The robots allow physicians, patients, nurses and other staff to "virtually" interact and talk at a moment's notice.

"Having the ability to see our patients and the ICU nursing staff and talk with them face to face when we can't be there in person greatly impacts how we're able to provide individualized treatment," said Dr. Saleem Zaidi, neuro-intensivist director in Methodist's NICU.

From a remote location, even from home, a physician uses a laptop and joystick to guide the robot to the patient's bedside, review medical chart information and speak with patients and nurses. Through a widescreen, two-way TV monitor, the doctor communicates with the patient and nurse face to face to determine the appropriate and immediate care needed. The ability to address patient care on a moment's notice is especially helpful for treating acute stroke patients.

“Our window of opportunity for effective treatment is within three hours of the onset of stroke symptoms. This robotic technology gives us quicker access to the patients, and timeliness is everything in helping a stroke patient recover,” said Dr. David Chiu, medical director of the Eddy Scurlock Stroke Center.

The robots do not replace physicians seeing patients in person. Instead, they supplement physician visits for those times when they cannot be present, especially during the overnight shifts. Methodist hopes to expand this robotic technology to other locations within the hospital and throughout the Methodist System.

The robots are made by Santa Barbara, California-based InTouch Health®. Methodist received a major grant from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation for this robotic technology.

#### **About the Eddy Scurlock Stroke Center**

With 18 beds, the Eddy Scurlock Stroke Center at the Methodist Neurological Institute (NI) is the largest dedicated stroke unit in Texas and designated a certified primary stroke center by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). The Center is a leader in all areas of stroke research, including diagnosis, innovative treatment, prevention, rehabilitation, and recovery.

#### **About the Methodist Neurological Institute**

The Methodist Neurological Institute houses the practice and research activities of the departments of neurology, neurosurgery, neuroradiology, physical medicine & rehabilitation, and neuropsychiatry of The Methodist Hospital. The collaboration between these departments offers patients the most advanced treatment options available. The mission of the NI is to advance the discovery of the origins, mechanisms and treatment of neurological disease and to provide comprehensive care for patients with disorders and injuries of the brain and spinal cord.

The Methodist Hospital is one of the nation’s largest private, non-profit general hospitals. Methodist is primarily affiliated with Weill Medical College of Cornell University and New York Presbyterian Hospital. The hospital is also affiliated with the University of Houston.

Methodist is ranked among the country's top centers in six specialties in *U.S News & World Report's 2006 America's Best Hospitals* issue. The hospital ranked in more specialties than any other hospital in Houston, and is 10<sup>th</sup> on the list for neurology and neurosurgery.

For more on the Methodist Neurological Institute, visit [www.methodistneuroinstitute.com](http://www.methodistneuroinstitute.com), or call (713) 790-3333.