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Department of Public Relations

## MR. ROUNDER IS ON-CALL AT HACKENSACK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

It's the day after surgery, you're lying in bed and the nurse informs you the doctor will be in shortly. Good news – just the person you're hoping to see will be in soon. Sure enough in rolls your doctor, all 5 feet, 4 inches and 215 pounds and you can't believe your eyes. Not because the doctor is there as promised, but because your doctor is housed within a remote-controlled adult-sized robot.

Does this sound a bit like science fiction? It isn't. The sophisticated mechanical physician is making its debut at Hackensack University Medical Center. As part of an initiative to improve the quality and efficiency of patient care, the medical center is pleased to introduce InTouch Health's RP-6 for Remote Presence, "Mr. Rounder," dubbed affectionately by staff, as part of the services available to patients.

Physician-to-patient communication is now possible regardless of whether a physician is out of town or out of the country for that matter. Garth H. Ballantyne, M.D., chief of Minimally Invasive Surgery at the medical center and professor of Surgery at UMDNJ, is the first to "test drive" Mr. Rounder at Hackensack University Medical Center. Dr. Ballantyne is able to make his rounds off-site or from his office anytime of the day via a laptop computer connected to the Internet via broadband and a wireless network. The connection is a sophisticated secure encrypted connection – completely HIPPA compliant. The robot has a two-way video, and 24-infrared sensors to navigate its travels. Dr. Ballantyne's image is displayed on a flat-screen computer monitor mounted on top of the robot. The screen rotates 340 degrees and pivots up and down creating personalized mechanical affectations. He views the patient and surroundings through a video camera located above the monitor allowing live interactive communication. Of course in the meantime, patients continue to be monitored by the medical center's Magnet award winning nursing staff.



Busy making the rounds, Garth H. Ballantyne, M.D., chief of Minimally Invasive Surgery at Hackensack University Medical Center and professor of Surgery at UMDNJ, makes the rounds without leaving his office via the InTouch Health's RP-6 for Remote Presence robot, Mr. Rounder. Patient, Veronica Mathieson of Clifton, carries on a live conversation with Dr. Ballantyne as his image is displayed on a flat-screen computer monitor.

"The robot is remarkably personal. It provides virtual communication and patients really like him. It has received an enthusiastic response," said Dr. Ballantyne. "In essence, we are providing extra coverage patients might not ordinarily get. I am now able to dial up, connect, and see my patients when family members are visiting. Driving the robot into the room is more personal than a phone call from my office."

Mr. Rounder also provides access to electronic patient files. "I can view vital signs, CT scans, blood tests - much of the technical data needed for patient care," noted Dr. Ballantyne.

As you watch Mr. Rounder humming through the halls, you get a sense he's become a familiar face around Hackensack University Medical Center as staff passing by quickly greet Dr. Ballantyne as though he's really there – physically that is!