



March 29, 2005

Shawnee Mission Medical Center announced that is the first hospital in the Midwest, and one of only 10 hospitals throughout the nation, to utilize a robot to increase patient–physician communication – improving physician efficiency, quality of care and patient satisfaction.

RP-6™, the 5-foot 4-inch robot, built by InTouch Health, Inc. and nick-named REMi by SMMC physicians and staff, has a flat-screen computer monitor mounted on top. Connected to the Internet via the hospital’s secure wireless network, the system includes a two-way video feed, a microphone and a speaker. When in use, the robot is guided by a physician using a joystick from a computerized control station in another location, most often the physician’s home or office.

“The robot provides physicians with an opportunity to increase physician-to-patient communication, which is crucial for consistently delivering high quality care,” said Joseph Petelin, MD, FACS, a general surgeon who regularly uses the robot to communicate with patients during evenings and weekends. “REMi offers both physicians and patients increased access to each other beyond traditional in-room visits.”

The use of REMi at Shawnee Mission Medical Center is not meant to replace important daily interaction between patients and physicians. Rather, the robot serves as an extension to traditional patient-physician interaction, improving communication and increasing patient (and family) satisfaction.

“I found it very reassuring that I was able to communicate with my own physician about my discharge plans,” said patient Larry D’Angelo, of Mission, Kan. “Since Dr. Petelin was not at the hospital, one of his colleagues would have normally given me the information. I felt more comfortable that Dr. Petelin – who was aware of my condition and had been with me each step of the way – was in charge of every aspect of my care.”

Shawnee Mission Medical Center physicians are also utilizing the robot in the hospital’s Critical Care Unit and Cath Lab.

“REMi’s real-time audio and video capabilities not only allow me to personally speak with patients, but they also provide me with a clear view of patients’ physical characteristics, such as incisions or wounds,” said Michael Nelson, MD, a pulmonologist who frequently uses the robot to visit patients after hours in the Critical Care Unit.

Cardiologist Paul Kramer, MD, says REMi has allowed him to personally discharge patients in between Cath Lab procedures, rather than making patients wait until he has a block of time to travel to individual rooms.

“Most patients are eager to get home after a hospital stay, and many times my schedule does not allow me to discharge them in a timely manner once I have begun Cath Lab cases,” said Kramer. “REMi allows me to personally discharge my patients in between cases so they have a quicker opportunity to continue their recovery at home.”

“The use of the robot is an example of why I research doctors and hospitals before having a procedure,” said Petelin’s patient, D’Angelo. “I’m looking for physicians who are constantly striving to improve their

practices and who are using cutting-edge methods. The robot is a positive and innovative addition to care at Shawnee Mission Medical Center.”

About Shawnee Mission Medical Center

Shawnee Mission Medical Center (SMMC), www.shawneemission.org, is a 383-bed facility located in suburban Kansas City. SMMC is the second-largest hospital in the Kansas City metropolitan area with more than 19,000 inpatient and 180,000 outpatient admissions in 2004. SMMC was named one of the nation's 100 Top Hospitals® by Solucient, the leading source of health care business intelligence, in 2002 and 2004. In addition, SMMC was one of only three organizations statewide to earn the Kansas Award for Excellence in 2004, the top quality award in Kansas, and is the only hospital to have earned the recognition twice (1998 and 2004). SMMC has the busiest emergency department in Johnson County, the area's first accredited Chest Pain Emergency Center, and a nationally recognized Center for Women's Health and delivers more babies each year than any other hospital in the Kansas City metropolitan area. SMMC employs more than 2,800 local residents and supports an exceptional staff of more than 700 physicians representing 50 medical specialties, the largest medical staff in Kansas City.

About InTouch Health

InTouch Health® is a privately held company based in Santa Barbara, Calif. InTouch Health provides technology solutions which dramatically increase the effectiveness of health care professionals. The company is addressing the impending demographic crisis in acute care by pioneering the use of Remote Presence™ in health care with its RP-6™ robotic system. Through a proprietary communications and mobile robotic platform, skilled medical professionals are projected to other settings where a patient or caregiver is located to provide care, coach and train staff, or monitor health care services. The InTouch Health solution leverages the time and expertise of healthcare professionals across multiple care facilities, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of care delivery.