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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **New Sparrow operating suites feature advanced robotic surgery**

*Clinicians control high-tech monitors, room-to-room video conferencing*

LANSING, Mich. — As part of a long-term investment to bring the most advanced patient care to mid-Michigan, Sparrow Hospital has installed two robotic surgical systems into new state-of-the-science operating rooms in the Sparrow Tower. The operating rooms feature the latest technology available, and the advanced robotic surgical platforms allow Sparrow surgeons to keep up with local demand for robotic-assisted surgery and more conveniently offer a wider range of expanded treatment options to a greater number of patients.

“Sophisticated monitoring capabilities are the hallmark of Sparrow’s new operating rooms,” said **Larry Rawsthorne**, M.D., Sparrow’s senior vice-president of medical affairs. “This advanced equipment allows our experienced and dedicated team of clinicians to expand treatment options for patients. Mid-Michigan residents don’t have to travel long distances to receive care from surgeons equipped with some of the world’s most advanced technology.”

The two new operating rooms are the first of a total of six high-tech operating suites located in the Sparrow Tower that will be up and running by the end of June. The operating rooms are spacious enough to accommodate complicated surgical and monitoring platforms, and a system of mounted light cameras and displays eliminates the need to run cables along the operating room floor, creating a clear working environment for surgical teams. Clinicians can consult with one another through room-to-room video conferencing.

Sparrow’s new operating rooms house two advanced robotic surgical systems. While hospitals from Greenwich, Conn., to Reno, Nevada, are only now beginning to use the revolutionary da Vinci Surgical System, which features three-dimensional, high-definition visual technology, Sparrow premiered mid-Michigan’s first da Vinci unit three years ago.

The health system acquired a second \$1.5 million robotic surgical system earlier this year to keep up with patient demand, and the new operating rooms allow both robots to be used on a full-time schedule to accommodate the growing demand for robotic-assisted surgery, such as hysterectomies and prostate removal. Robotic-assisted surgery causes less pain and scarring, cuts recovery time by as much as half — and, in the case of prostate cancer surgery, lowers the risks of impotence and incontinence.

(more)

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“When some people hear ‘robotic-assisted surgery,’ they almost picture a machine with a mind of its own hovering over an operating table. In reality, the da Vinci unit’s miniaturized robotic arms are controlled at all times by a highly trained surgeon, working in conjunction with specialized operating room staff,” said **April Morris**, N.P., patient care manager for Sparrow’s robotic surgery program. “Patients are surprised by how quickly they return to their normal routine after robotic-assisted surgery. More patients are telling their friends and neighbors about the benefits, and we’re seeing a growing demand for Sparrow’s da Vinci program.”

Women who undergo a robotic-assisted hysterectomy typically return to their daily activities in 14 to 20 days, rather than the typical six-week recovery period required for open surgery. With incisions as small as the size of a quarter, there is significantly less scarring. For men who need a prostatectomy to remove a cancerous prostate gland, robotic-assisted surgery decreases the risks of two common complications of the traditional prostate surgery — impotence and incontinence.

Nearly 1,000 robotic-assisted surgeries have been performed at Sparrow since 2005. With a team of 11 surgeons, registered nurses and surgical technologists who have intensive training in the da Vinci system, Sparrow’s program is regarded as a model. Sparrow’s specialists train other surgeons who are establishing a program using the da Vinci system, which is made by Intuitive Surgical, a Silicon Valley company.

In a da Vinci-assisted surgery, the chief surgeon sits a few feet away from the patient, viewing a highly magnified, three-dimensional image of the surgical area while manipulating robotic arms. The four robotic arms cannot be programmed, and rely on a surgeon’s movements that are transmitted into real-time, micro-movements of the instruments. Another surgeon, nurse practitioner or certified first assistant remains at the patient’s bedside to assist.

The 10-story, \$160 million Sparrow Tower, the newest addition to Sparrow Hospital, is the largest single expenditure ever made in this region to expand health care services.

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*As mid-Michigan’s premier health care organization and the region’s largest private employer, Sparrow has two Lansing campuses, affiliate hospitals in St. Johns, Carson City and Ionia, dozens of satellite care centers, the Sparrow Health Science Pavilion and the Michigan Athletic Club. A major teaching hospital, Sparrow also offers 24 residency programs established in partnership with Michigan State University.*

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