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**ROBOTIC SURGERY FOR JOINT REPLACEMENT NOW AVAILABLE IN THE MIDLANDS***First Procedure Performed at Providence Health-Northeast on June 27*

**COLUMBIA, SC** – Providence Health performed the Midlands' first robotic-assisted joint replacement surgery yesterday with great success. This robotic technology transforms the way partial knee, total knee and total hip replacements are performed. People suffering from osteoarthritis (OA), also called degenerative joint disease, will benefit most from this new offering.

The robotic joint replacement system uses a robotic arm to help facilitate the operation, but that is only *part* of its technological innovation. The system also provides the surgeon with an interactive model of the joint itself, created by a multi-layered CT scan of the patient's actual joint, into which the surgeon pre-plans and programs the procedure. This allows for considerations and adjustments to be made virtually as the surgeon walks through the entire process "in" the joint prior to incision.

Once the surgical plan is programmed into the robotic arm, the surgeon can guide the arm according to the precise dimensions outlined in the plan. If the surgeon determines that an adjustment needs to be made, he/she can make changes at any time.

According to the [Osteoarthritis Action Alliance](#), OA is the most common form of arthritis, and more than 30.8 million adults have the condition. That number is expected to increase dramatically as the Baby Boomer generation ages. In addition, an estimated two-thirds of overweight adults may develop OA in the knee, so the prevalence of OA is expected to further increase with rising rates of obesity.

**In fact, by 2030, nearly 3.5 million Americans will undergo total knee replacement surgery every year**, according to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, and more than half a million will get total hip replacements.

Benefits of the robotic-assisted joint replacement procedure include:

- Smaller incisions
- Faster recovery
- Optimal implant placement
- Potentially reduced impact to surrounding tissue

It is important to note that in robotic-assisted joint replacement surgery, the entire procedure from planning to implantation is performed by an orthopedic surgeon. The robotic element is an advanced tool for providing higher quality care for patients and does not replace the skill of the surgeon.

Dr. Slif D. Ulrich, Orthopedic Surgeon with Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery who performed the first procedure using the new robotic technology at Providence Health, is excited to provide this option to his patients. "I find a lot of value in being able to review and measure the joint and surrounding tissue in such detail before and during the procedure," he says. "This added layer allows us to achieve component placement accuracy and to enhance clinical outcomes."

For people with OA, mobility can become increasingly limited as the disease progresses and joint pain continues to escalate. Robotic-assisted total knee replacement can relieve pain from OA-related degeneration that has spread into the medial, lateral and patella sections of the knee joint. Partial knee replacement is a treatment option for OA that has not progressed to all three knee compartments. Robotic-assisted hip replacement treats degeneration of the hip joint, another complication for some sufferers of OA.

"I'm pleased that we will not only be able to offer this technology, but we will also have the opportunity to effectively use it in all three of its applications, (partial knee, total knee and total hip replacement) to improve quality of life for a significant population here in the Midlands," said Dr. Ulrich.

"We are proud to offer this highly innovative procedure and advanced robotic technology to help further improve health outcomes for our patients," said Lindy White, CEO of Providence Health-Northeast. "This new surgical offering is just one more way we are fulfilling our mission of Making Communities Healthier by Extending Christ's Healing Ministry and providing the highest quality care close to home for those we serve."

For a list of surgeons providing robotic-assisted joint replacement surgery in the Midlands call 800-424-DOCS.

**About Providence Health:** A part of LifePoint Health, Providence Health is nationally-recognized for top-quality cardiovascular, orthopedic, and surgical services. Providence is composed of two hospitals, multiple physician practices, a network of rehabilitation centers, imaging and diagnostics labs, a school of cardiac diagnostics and an accredited chest pain center. Providence employs nearly 1,800 dedicated staff. Founded in 1938 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Providence is known statewide for outstanding clinical quality and compassionate care. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services awarded Providence Health a 4-star rating, the highest rank issued to a Columbia health care entity, and the Providence open heart surgery program has consistently ranked in the top 15 percent of open heart programs in the nation. For more information, visit [YourProvidenceHealth.com](http://YourProvidenceHealth.com).

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