

Reading, Writing and Robotics

Students learn cutting edge surgery can lead to technology opportunities

Medical advancements have led to beneficial changes for today's patients. Robotic surgery, for instance, reduces pain and discomfort, as well as the time a patient has to stay in the hospital - from weeks to days.

That was just one of the revelations for a group of Science National Honor Society Students from Rockford (IL) Lutheran High School who recently visited OSF Healthcare Saint Anthony Medical Center.

President of the group, senior Taylor Berke, says she's always been passionate about science and says she wants to go into medical oncology.

"I wanted to, like, dedicate my life to, like, making advancements in the medical field and, like, helping as many people as possible," says Taylor Berke, Science National Honor Society student from Rockford Lutheran High School.

One of the presenters, Dr. Lawrence Prabhaker, a colon and rectal surgeon with OSF Surgical Group - Rockford, who is also head of the robotic surgery program at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center, says it's important for students to understand the many ways to use an advanced science or technology degree. That they can work at the cutting edge of medical technology even though you're not actually performing the procedure.

Conversely, Dr. Prabhaker believes it is the advancements robotic surgery provides that is attracting a new generation of care givers to medicine.

"Newer surgeons that are coming through programs they want the technology they want to learn the technology," says Dr. Lawrence Prabhaker, colorectal surgeon and head of the robotic surgery program at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "Because they see the difference that it makes, And, I think, that it's always good to have a new perspective. It's always good to try new and different things. I think that a lot of technology has come in and we sometime have a lot of great technology - what we have to find is the best way to use it. What's the most effective way to use it for our patients."

What impressed student visitor Berke the most is how minimally invasive robotic surgery is and how much can be accomplished in a very small area. She is also excited about the range of career opportunities that such technology provides.

"I definitely have, like, an open mind to, like, what can be possible," says Berke. "And, like, new advancements that can be made instead of just focusing on what has been done, but, like, looking to see what more can be done."

The robotic surgery program at OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center is one of the most robust in the region, with surgeons performing colorectal, orthopedic, ENT, cardiothoracic and cardiovascular procedures.

For more information go to www.osfsaintanthony.org.