

Taking Orthopedic Surgery to the Next Level

Orthopedic surgery is getting a leg up at St. Joseph Medical Center with new surgical robot.

Most meet-and-greets don't involve the sounds of a bone saw floating through the air. But then again, most meet-and-greets don't include a hands-on introduction to a cutting edge robot specializing in orthopedic surgery.

On Wednesday, OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Medical Center introduced Mission Partners to its new Mako Robotic-Arm Surgical System for joint replacement.

Using a virtual 3D model, the Mako System allows surgeons to create each patient's surgical plan pre-operatively before even entering the operating room. During the procedure, the surgeon can validate that plan and make any necessary adjustments while guiding the robotic-arm to execute that plan.

Joint replacement surgery is on the rise. Total knee replacements in the United States are expected to increase 673 percent by 2030, yet studies have shown that approximately 30 percent of patients are dissatisfied after conventional surgery.

OSF HealthCare CEO Bob Sehring says OSF St. Joseph's latest move to have the Mako System available in its orthopedic division is a direct reflection of OSF HealthCare's commitment to provide the community with outstanding health care.

"It's that technology that will allow us to provide high quality, better outcomes for our patients," said Sehring. He continued, "When we look at technology – and of course we look at technology all across our ministry in all different settings – really it is a hallmark for OSF of looking at these and really taking and embracing what is best for patients, and how we best meet patients' needs. This technology is a great example of that."

Surgeons at OSF St. Joseph Medical Center will use the Mako robot for both knee and hip replacements. The first Bloomington surgeries are scheduled for this month.

The Mako System gives surgeons a more predictable joint replacement surgical experience. According to OSF St. Joseph president Lynn Fulton, patients have been asking for it by name.

"We've been asked several times even over the past year if we had the Mako technology, or if we were looking at the Mako technology by patients who were thinking about joint replacement," said Fulton. She explained, "The Mako is able to make more precise cuts, which means preservation of bone. It also equates to less pain for patients. They are also able to do partials, which is something a lot of times a surgeon will shy away from, and patients are able to sometimes get their surgery earlier and have it be less invasive."

Three surgeons have been trained to use the Mako System at OSF St. Joseph Medical Center: Brett Keller, DO; Shaun Kink, MD and Joseph K. Newcomer, MD. David Anderson, MD is scheduled to be certified November 30.