

TO MEDIA:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**REGION'S FIRST GALLBLADDER REMOVED
WITH ROBOTIC SURGERY AT EXCELA HEALTH**

LATROBE, PA, April 25, 2012 ... An Excelsa Health surgeon performed the first da Vinci® Single-Site™ Cholecystectomy in southwestern Pennsylvania April 19 at Excelsa Latrobe Hospital. The patient's gallbladder was removed through one tiny incision in the belly button, making the procedure virtually scarless and she was home within hours of the surgery.

More than 1 million people in the United States have their gallbladder removed each year. Most are performed with traditional laparoscopy using several incisions. That procedure is traditionally called a laparoscopic cholecystectomy (removal of the gallbladder). But now, using robotic assistance, surgeon Daniel Clark, MD, removed the gallbladder through an incision of approximately one inch.

Excelsa Health is one of only 100 hospitals nationwide to have the Single-Site instruments and Dr. Clark is one of 50 surgeons in the country who has received training to perform the surgery.

"Neither robotic surgery nor single-incision surgery is new, but combining the two to remove the gallbladder requires additional training and special equipment," said Dr. Clark. "To be one of the first hospitals to offer this technically advanced surgery demonstrates Excelsa Health's leadership in providing patients with the most up-to-date minimally invasive surgical options."

“Single-Site instruments used with the da Vinci platform are the next step in the evolution of surgical technologies,” he said. “We are truly excited to be a leader today in the surgical treatment of tomorrow.”

This was a first-ever surgery for the 48-year-old Mt. Pleasant woman, who had discussed her condition in detail with Dr. Clark and researched her surgical options online. “The thoroughness of his explanation regarding the procedure and his confidence made me very comfortable,” she said. “Who wouldn’t want a single tiny incision?”

Potential benefits of Single-Site gallbladder surgery include virtually scarless results, minimal pain, low blood loss, fast recovery, a short hospital stay and high patient satisfaction. The surgery can be performed in about one hour and is considered an outpatient procedure.

The Food and Drug Administration cleared the specialized Single-Site instruments for use with the da Vinci System in December 2011. da Vinci is a robotic surgical system widely used in complex minimally invasive surgery.

During the procedure, the surgeon sits comfortably at a console, viewing a 3D, high-definition image of the patient’s anatomy. The surgeon uses controls below the viewer to move the instrument arms and camera. In real-time, the system translates the surgeon's hand, wrist and finger movements into more precise movements of the miniaturized instruments inside the patient.

Unlike traditional robotic surgeries requiring three to five small incisions, this new technology allows for a single incision in the belly button where instruments are placed and the diseased gallbladder is removed.

Most people who require gallbladder removal are candidates for the robotic, single-incision surgery. According to the American College of Surgeons, surgery is the recommended treatment for gallbladder pain from gallstones and non-functioning gallbladders.

Nine surgeons on staff at Excelsa Health offer various types of robotic-assisted surgeries using the da Vinci system at Latrobe Hospital. In addition to gallbladder removal, Excelsa surgeons perform robotic-assisted surgery for hysterectomy and uterine prolapse among other conditions in the area of gynecology, prostate and kidney cancer removal in the field of urology as well as hernia and bowel procedures. Excelsa Health also offers a wide range of minimally invasive conventional laparoscopic surgeries.

To view a robotic-assisted surgery or learn more about surgical options at Excelsa Health, visit www.excelahealth.org or call 1-877-771-1234.

MORE PHOTOS OF ACTUAL AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST