

# Virtua launches robotic-assisted joint replacement technology

By Danielle DeSisto, staff writer Mar 27, 2017 0

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Dr. Jeremy Reid, of Virtua's Joint Replacement Institute in Voorhees, uses robotic-assisted technology to perform total joint replacement surgeries.

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**MOUNT HOLLY** — When it became difficult to get in and out of his car, David Hamm knew it was time to do something about the arthritis in his knee.

The township resident had received a few silicone shots in his knee to help relieve pain and improve mobility, but his doctor advised him that getting another shot would only prolong the problem. He had already lost 30 percent of his knee joint mobility.

At the recommendation of Dr. Jeremy Reid, at Virtua's Joint Replacement Institute in Voorhees, Hamm became one of over 300 patients to undergo joint replacement surgery using robotic-arm-assisted technology. He had his surgery in December.

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Virtua, with hospital locations in Mount Holly, Evesham and Voorhees, has been using the system since 2015 for partial knee replacement and hip surgeries. But the technology recently advanced to total knee replacements.

The system, from medical technology developer Stryker-Mako, allows doctors to use CT scans to create patient-specific 3-D models to plan the surgery in advance. Doctors can then use the robotic arm to make more accurate cuts to the bone to prepare for prosthesis placement.

Customizing procedures to the patient's body has helped surgeons overcome challenges they used to face when operating on a person with bone problems.

"It allows us to accommodate deformities and arthritis with great accuracy," Reid said. "It better reproduces patient anatomy because we can visualize in 3-D modeling prior to the procedure."

The technology operates with an accuracy within half a millimeter or less.

"The accuracy and precision is something that we can't really match when doing it in a conventional way," Reid said.

He and Dr. Scott Schoifet, medical director of the institute, worked with Mako engineers to create the robotic-assisted procedure, Reid said.

"We are proud to have been involved in this development," Schoifet said in a statement. "The Virtua Joint Replacement Institute has had a long history in the advancement of joint replacement technology, such as with the quad-sparing total knee replacement."

Some patients are initially wary of the robotic aspect of the procedure, but Reid said surgeons have complete control over the robotic arm, and it cannot perform any part of the operation on its own.

Patients' experience is the same as what they would undergo through traditional joint replacement surgeries, Reid said.

Hamm used a walker and went through physical rehabilitation for a few weeks after his surgery. He saw himself steadily improve during the course of his treatment.

"They were amazed at how fast I was recovering," he said.

He has regained 100 percent of the joint mobility in his knee, and it's a whole lot easier to get into his car.

"I can get around just fine now. It's marvelous," Hamm said.

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