

Paging Dr. Robot, your patient is waiting

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RP-7, a wireless, mobile, remote-presence robot developed by [InTouch Health](#) was recently put into action at the Healdsburg District Hospital in Sonoma County, Calif.

Healdsburg District Hospital has become California's first Critical Access Hospital (a Medicare designation for rural limited service hospitals) to acquire a remote-presence robot, enabling the hospital's patients and doctors to consult directly with specialists from around the world.

Credit: James Martin/CNET News.com



A patient meets with Dr. Jim Gude, who is consulting with the patient from a hospital in Santa Rosa, Calif. Equipped with video cameras, a microphone and an LCD screen, doctors are able to successfully interact with patients over the Internet.

Credit: James Martin/CNET News.com



Dr. Gude's face appears on the robot's "head," an LCD monitor. The two video camera "eyes" can pan, tilt and zoom, allowing the doctor to clearly examine the patient and safely navigate the robot's surroundings.

Credit: James Martin/CNET News.com



The wireless system and video technology, along with proximity sensors, allow a doctor thousands of miles away to freely roam the hospital halls to visit with patients and doctors.

Credit: James Martin/CNET News.com



From the laptop control station at Healdsburg Hospital, Dr. James Finn, Director of the intensive care unit practices operating one of the RP-7 robots at the InTouch Health offices in Santa Barbara, Calif. The simple interface can be used from any laptop computer and a joystick controls the movement and the rotation of the head.

Credit: James Martin/CNET News.com



RP-7 pays a visit to patient Jackie Cruz to check on her condition as Dr. Mark Blankenship, director of surgical services, watches. In addition to using visual and voice technologies, the physician at the control station can access patients' medical records, giving the doctor all the necessary information to conduct a medical consultation.

The RP-7 robot was acquired as part of ongoing improvements in technology and infrastructure to the Healdsburg District Hospital. Maggie and Harry Wetzel were the lead donors to the campaign, which includes the construction of the Wetzel Family Emergency Department, planned to open later this summer. When completed, the Remote Presence Robot will be a critical tool in the new emergency department and in the ICU.

Credit: James Martin/CNET News.com



Patient Jackie and nurse Joanne chat while Dr. Gude consults with them through RP-7.

Credit: James Martin/CNET News.com

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