

For Immediate Release

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**St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor leads new
FDA-approved robotic surgery **that helps treat** sleep apnea**

ANN ARBOR, Mich. – (Nov. 2014) – A new robotic surgery procedure offered at St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor called TORS (Trans Oral Robotic Surgery) has been approved by the FDA to offer a solution to sleep apnea, a serious sleep disorder that occurs when a person's breathing is interrupted during sleep.

People with untreated sleep apnea stop breathing repeatedly during their sleep, sometimes up to 50 times an hour. With a host of associated ailments including hypertension, abnormal heart rhythm, stroke, traffic and workplace accidents -- even death-- sleep apnea has become a national priority as it contributes to excess health care costs and poor quality of life.

For the 18 million Americans who suffer from Obstructive Sleep Apnea, TORS offers another option for those who are not finding relief from existing methods, such as CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) breathing masks, dental appliances or weight loss.

"Many people are not able to tolerate sleeping with a CPAP mask for the rest of their lives," said Dr. Paul Hoff, M.S., section head of Otolaryngology at Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, who was the lead author of the FDA clinical study. "This is an option that provides a long term solution, and we are so pleased to be able to now offer it to patients **across Michigan and the country.**"

For select patients, this minimally invasive procedure allows doctors to surgically remove the soft tissue in the back of the throat which is causing blockage of the airway. With the use of the daVinci Robotic Surgery System, surgeons are able to

reach farther back into the oral cavity and visualize better than ever before using high definition 3D cameras and miniature robotic arms.

As the lead institution in the FDA clinical study, St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor (SJMAA) has been the site of more than 200 TORS procedures performed by Dr. Hoff since 2010. This is the largest number of TORS procedures done in the world, making SJMAA a center of excellence.

John Hoffmann, who lives in Brighton and owns a floor covering business, has suffered from severe sleep apnea for most of his 65 years. His wife, who works as a surgical technologist at SJMAA, encouraged him to consider TORS.

"I was always dog tired and falling asleep at work or at the dinner table—even at stop lights-- and my snoring was terrible," said Hoffmann.

Hoffmann had the surgery a year ago after struggling with the CPAP device that he found awkward and cumbersome. He had his uvula, adenoids, tonsils and soft tissue at the back of his tongue removed, and although recovery was difficult, he says the surgery was well worth it.

"Life is so much better," said Hoffmann. "To wake up feeling refreshed and feel human again is unbelievable. I actually dream now because I'm finally getting deep sleep."

St. Joseph Mercy Sleep Centers are dedicated to helping patients by providing a state-of-the-art comprehensive program for the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders. The centers provide the latest overnight "in laboratory" studies as well as "home" studies to diagnose and treat sleep apnea, narcolepsy, insomnia, restless leg syndrome, snoring and other disorders that can affect patients' quality of life and, if left untreated, could result in much more serious medical conditions. Locations with sleep centers include St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor, St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea, and IHA Sleep Disorders Centers in Howell and Brighton.

For more information, call 855-SJROBOT or visit stjoeshealth.org/robot.

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About Saint Joseph Mercy Health System

Saint Joseph Mercy Health System (SJMHS) is a health care organization serving six counties in southeast Michigan including Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne. It includes 537-bed St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor, 443-bed St. Joseph Mercy Oakland in Pontiac, 304-bed St. Mary Mercy Livonia, 164-bed St. Joseph Mercy Port Huron, 136-bed St. Joseph Mercy Livingston in Howell, and 113-bed St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea. Combined, the six hospitals are licensed for 1,697 beds, have six outpatient health centers, five urgent care facilities, more than 25 specialty centers; employ more than 14,000 individuals and have a medical staff of nearly 3,200 physicians. SJMHS has annual operating revenues of about \$1.9 billion and returns \$127 million to its communities annually through charity care and community benefit programs.

SJMHS is a member of Trinity Health, the second largest Catholic health care system in the country. Based in Livonia, Mich., Trinity Health operates in 21 states, employs about 89,000 people, has annual operating revenues of about \$13.6 billion and assets of about \$19.3 billion. Additionally, the new organization returns almost \$900 million to its communities annually in the form of charity care and other community benefit programs.

For more information on health services offered at Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, please visit www.stjoeshealth.org.