

PENNSYLVANIA

PHYSICIAN

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA MEDICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2016 • VOLUME 3, NUMBER 3



EDUCATION **EDGE**

Long a leader in education and training, Pennsylvania continues to deliver the cutting-edge curricula that attract students and produce doctors who can deliver quality care in a shifting practice environment.



30

PAIN RELIEF

PAMED addresses the issues that keep physicians up at night

34

OPIOID ACTION

PAMED takes the fight against opioid abuse to legislators



Andrew W. Gurman, MD, an orthopedic hand surgeon from Hollidaysburg, Pa., was sworn in as the 171st president of the American Medical Association (AMA) on June 14, 2016. As a longtime member of PAMED, Dr. Gurman has represented Pennsylvania physicians at the AMA House of Delegates for nearly two decades and twice served as chair of its political action committee. "I am honored to serve as AMA president during this pivotal time and be a voice for physicians nationwide," says Dr. Gurman. "It is my privilege to lead this organization to ensure physicians' needs are met."

PENNSYLVANIA SURGEON LEADS THE WAY IN TRANSORAL ROBOTIC SURGERY

David Goldenberg, MD, FACS, Baron Professor and Chief of Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery at Penn State College of Medicine and Penn State Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pa., is now the second surgeon in the U.S. to perform operations using the Flex® Robotic System. The revolutionary system makes it possible to access locations in the body that were previously difficult or impossible to reach using minimally invasive techniques.

The development of robotics in the field of head and neck surgery has given surgeons the capability to access anatomic locations that were

previously only managed via open techniques. Prior to robotic surgery, the mandible, the floor of the mouth, and the neck would need to be split

open like a book to permit access to areas deep in the head and neck.

Dr. Goldenberg and his team have employed a dedicated Flex system to perform 16 operations to date,



Dr. Goldenberg and Dr. Ben Oberman operate with the Flex robotic system at Penn State Hershey Medical Center.

including a radical tonsillectomy, a pharyngectomy, a tongue base resection, a supraglottic laryngectomy, and even resections of masses from the nasopharynx — all without ever needing to split the palate.

Transoral robotic surgery (TORS) began in Pennsylvania in 2005 with the development of the Da Vinci® Surgical System by Drs. Gregory Weinstein and Bert O'Malley and their team at the University of Pennsylvania. The first operations performed using the Da Vinci system employed the natural orifice of the oral cavity as a surgical entrance point. The Penn group was instrumental in developing,

researching, disseminating, and educating head and neck surgeons in TORS in its early days, and until recently, the Da Vinci robot was the only platform in use.

The newest iteration of robotic surgical equipment is the Flex Robotic System from Medrobotics, a Raynham, Mass.-based supplier. Surgeons can steer the system's flexible robotic arm and camera around anatomical structures to see views that may not be revealed by other techniques in high definition.

The Flex Robotic System can navigate an almost 180-degree path to reach challenging surgical targets. Surgeons can

then use it to deploy 3 mm, articulating instruments to perform procedures.

The system was approved for head and neck surgery by the FDA in October 2015, and the following month, Penn's Umamaheswar Duvvuri, MD, Ph.D., became the first American surgeon to use it in surgery.

Dr. Goldenberg, who helped develop the Flex system and its instrumentation, became the second American surgeon to operate with it in December 2015. Dr. Goldenberg says that the flexible robot represents the natural progression of TORS, and that doctors can expect more exciting developments in the near future.
