

## **Raising Awareness About Prostate Cancer**

September 11, 2008 11:30 AM Keith Brannon  
kbrannon@tulane.edu

In commemoration of September as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, Tulane University is planning a live demonstration of the daVinci surgical robotic system that gives doctors minimally invasive options for complex surgical procedures. The demonstration will take place on Tuesday (Sept. 16) from 1 until 7 p.m. at Lakeside Shopping Center in Metairie, La.



The daVinci surgical robotic system that gives doctors minimally invasive options for complex surgical procedures will be demonstrated on Tuesday (Sept. 16). (Photo from the Tulane Department of Urology)

Visitors to the Tulane booth will “become the surgeon” as they manipulate the robot in the hands-on demonstration. They also will have the opportunity to meet Tulane urologists, view videos of actual urologic robotic surgeries, as well as learn about Tulane's free monthly prostate cancer screenings and bi-monthly prostate cancer support group.

Besides drastically decreasing pain and blood loss, the daVinci system provides surgeons with 3-D, high-definition viewing capabilities, including the option of up to

10 times magnification, greatly facilitating nerve-sparing, a major quality of life issue in the management of prostate cancer.

“Tulane's Department of Urology was among the first in the United States to acquire this advanced therapeutic option for the management of prostate cancer,” says Dr. Raju Thomas, chair of the [Tulane Urology Department](#). The department has the only approved fellowship training site for the daVinci robot in the Gulf South, [Thomas](#) adds.

Surgeons from the urology department have traveled extensively around the world lecturing on and teaching this new surgical option.

The [Tulane Cancer Center](#) is offering free prostate cancer screenings in New Orleans on the second Tuesday of each month, starting on Oct. 14.

The monthly screenings will take place from 5 until 6 p.m. and involve a simple blood test that measures levels of prostate-specific antigen, or PSA, which is a protein produced by the cells of the prostate gland. It is normal for men to have low levels of PSA in their blood. However, prostate cancer or benign (non-cancerous) conditions can increase PSA levels.

The American Cancer Center recommends that men be offered regular PSA tests, along with digital-rectal exams, beginning at age 50 or earlier for those at increased risk for prostate cancer, including those with a family history of prostate cancer or African-American men.

To make an appointment for a free prostate cancer screening, call 504-988-5800 or 1-800-588-5800. Free parking is available at the Saratoga Parking Garage, located on Saratoga Street between Cleveland Avenue and Canal Street. For more information, go to the [website](#) for free prostate cancer screenings or call 504-988-7869.