

## **Dr. Scott R. Schaffer of Advocare ENT Specialty Center Performs South Jersey's First Transoral Robotic Surgery (TORS) with the daVinci® Surgical System**

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Gibbsboro, NJ—**Scott R. Schaffer, MD, MS, FACS**, a board certified otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeon associated with **Advocare ENT Specialty Center** in Gibbsboro, New Jersey, recently completed the first Transoral Robotic Surgery (TORS) to be performed in South Jersey. TORS is a minimally-invasive procedure that uses the state-of-the-art *daVinci*® robotic surgical platform, designed to provide surgeons with superior vision, precision, dexterity, and access to difficult-to-reach areas of the throat. Its miniaturized instruments can bend and rotate 360 degrees—far beyond the capabilities of the human hand. Some *daVinci*-trained surgeons have said it's as if their hands are miniaturized while working inside the body. Dr. Schaffer compares the system to the most advanced video game he's ever seen.

**Dr. Schaffer was among the first ear, nose and throat physicians in the U.S. to learn the TORS techniques**, which is used primarily to remove cancers at the back of the tongue and throat, treat sleep apnea by removing tissue blockages in the throat, or perform thyroid surgery without leaving a visible scar. The TORS approach was first developed at the University of Pennsylvania in 2004 and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in December 2009.

Prior to performing his first TORS procedure at Kennedy Health System in Washington Twp, NJ, Dr. Schaffer underwent months of extensive training and certification, including practice surgeries on animals and cadavers. "The *daVinci* robot allows me to do procedures that were previously unavailable, because we could not put stitches in the back of the throat. TORS frequently requires no stitches, and when they are necessary, we can accomplish it with the delicate touch of a computerized robot. TORS also reduces bleeding and recovery times. Patients undergoing head and neck surgeries with TORS avoid lengthy hospital stays. They often go home the next day and heal quickly," says Dr. Schaffer.

For his first robotic case, completed on April 22, 2011, Dr. Schaffer performed a tongue reduction, tonsillectomy, and palatal reconstruction on a middle-aged woman with sleep apnea, a serious condition that interrupts breathing during sleep and is characterized by loud snoring. Upon the successful completion of the TORS procedure, the patient was breathing through her nose in the recovery room without snoring. She ate Jello® that night and went home the following day with only pain medicines for a sore throat.

Because TORS is performed through the mouth, the surgery requires no incisions and leaves no external scars. *da Vinci* robotic-assisted surgery also helps patients avoid the traumatic aspects of traditional open surgery, which requires cutting through the throat and jaw and can lead to a long and painful recovery. Other complications of open surgery may include disfigurement; difficulty eating, speaking, and swallowing; and a significant risk of patients requiring a permanent feeding tube.

Dr. Schaffer, notes that the *da Vinci* robot does not perform surgeries—it merely assists surgeons by allowing them to perform procedures in places like the back of the throat that were heretofore difficult or impossible to reach by traditional measures. Dr. Schaffer says, “*da Vinci* allows us to control the robotic fingers in a precise way, but the success of robotic-assisted surgery still depends on the skill of the surgeon. TORS is breakthrough medicine that will benefit many people and allow physicians to provide the best care for their patients.”

The significant benefits of *da Vinci* robotic-assisted surgery include:

- Low blood loss
- No tracheotomy needed
- Low risk of complications
- Short hospital stay
- No visible scarring or disfigurement.

*The da Vinci* surgical robot is used by other surgical specialists to perform gynecological, urological, colorectal, and cardiothoracic surgeries. It was pioneered for transoral use by Bert W. O’Malley, Jr. MD and Gregory S. Weinstein, MD, co-directors of the Penn Center for Head and Neck Cancer at the Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Schaffer is an Adjunct Associate Professor on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania Health System Department of Otorhinolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery.

Prior to founding Advocare ENT Specialty Center, Dr. Schaffer was head of the section of otolaryngology at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, NJ, where he also served as president of the medical staff and as a member of the board of trustees. He is Past President of the Camden County Medical Society and a member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery and The American College of Surgeons.

Dr. Schaffer graduated from The Medical College of Pennsylvania and completed his otolaryngology residency in Philadelphia at Temple University Hospital and St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. He is frequently recognized as a “Top Doc” by regional magazines including *Philadelphia*, *New Jersey Monthly*, *SJ*, and *South Jersey*, as well as by the Consumers' Research Council.

**Advocare ENT Specialty Center** serves adults and children in southern New Jersey with advanced subspecialty care of the ear, nose, and throat and related structures of the head and neck. Offering state-of-the-art diagnosis and treatment in a practice dedicated to delivering highly personal care, the physicians of Advocare ENT Specialty Center have particular expertise in caring for hearing loss, tinnitus, and dizziness. Patients also turn to Advocare ENT Specialty Center for chronic ear infections, sinusitis, snoring and sleep apnea, allergies and hay fever, swallowing disorders, nosebleeds, hoarseness, and head and neck cancer. Learn more at [www.AdvocareENTSpecialtyCenter.com](http://www.AdvocareENTSpecialtyCenter.com).

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