

SEL Today

HD on call: Sony's medical business

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This article is the first in a three-part series on Sony HD in the medical industry.

Dr. Michael A. Goldfarb doesn't watch football games on one of his Sony HDTVs ... or movies. In fact, the high-def action on this particular TV would be inappropriate for widespread release on Blu-ray™ Disc.



Dr. Michael A. Goldfarb observes a surgery via Sony videoconference

Goldfarb, chairman and program director for the department of surgery at Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch, N.J., uses his Sony HDTV – along with Sony professional cameras and video conference systems – as a tool to reduce surgical errors. Recently, he watched a live video of a surgeon at work in a nearby operating room.

The surgeon, Dr. Stephen Chagares, was preparing to remove a patient's stone-filled gallbladder – while simultaneously speaking with Goldfarb over the hospital's IP network using a Sony videoconferencing system.

Evan Krachman, marketing manager, surgery, Broadcast and Business Solutions Company, worked with Sony's medical group to install the system in October 2007. Using the system, Goldfarb can oversee the operating room and the hospital's pathology department from the screen in his office.

The 500-bed teaching hospital is one of a handful in the United States equipped with an HD video conferencing system, and it features Sony professional cameras, BRAVIA® displays and IPELA videoconferencing equipment.



Dr. Stephen Chagares operates while colleagues can look on over videoconference

“This is a pretty routine case, hopefully,” Goldfarb said as he watched Chagares make incisions into the patient’s abdomen, preparing for a laparoscopic surgery: a minimally-invasive operation using smaller incisions than in an open surgery.

Chagares, assistant program director at Monmouth Medical Center, inserted a five-millimeter-wide camera into one of the patient’s incisions, and a light into another. Goldfarb clicked a button on his remote, and the screen in his office switched to an HD view of the patient’s gallbladder.

“Seeing is believing,” Goldfarb said. “The thing that amazes me is this really represents a whole new way of looking at surgery. The laparoscopic picture you’re seeing here is identical to the picture Steve is seeing on his operating room screen.” You can see the gross pathology magnified 12 times what you would with your eyes if you were in the room.

Goldfarb, a self-proclaimed tech enthusiast whose wish list today includes Sony’s VAIO® P 8-inch notebook, uses the High Definition Video Conferencing system to proctor and observe new surgeons and to monitor experienced surgeons performing unusual procedures. He checks the surgery schedule every so often and – from his office – sits in on cases he finds interesting, with the surgeon’s permission.

Chagares, who said he considers himself a “Sony kind of guy” and owns a Handycam® camcorder, BRAVIA HDTV and a Sony home theater system, said he appreciates having a communication line to the chief of surgery. However, when his colleagues first saw the videoconferencing system, they thought of George Orwell’s Big Brother surveillance system.

“The orthopedic surgeons were throwing towels over the camera [to block the view],” Chagares said. “They didn’t understand the cameras aren’t on unless someone in the room turns them on. But once they realized they could [use the system to] ask one of their partners a question, it was OK.”

Chagares said in some cases, a second opinion or better view of the operation could be the difference between life and death. With videoconferencing, he can get a second opinion without even turning away from the patient.

Otherwise, he forgets the camera is there.



Chagares uses images taken with Sony cameras to get colleagues' second opinions.

“It isn’t weird to have someone watching [me operate],” Chagares said. “My conscience watching me is bigger than 1,000 people watching. The only thing that matters is I promised the patients I would treat them well and do a good job.”

Keep reading SEL Today for the third article in a three-part series on Sony HD in the medical industry. [Visit Sony’s medical website for more product information.](#)