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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **BARTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL WELCOMES 'DA VINCI' TO ITS SURGICAL TEAM**

South Lake Tahoe (March 1, 2012) — Barton Memorial Hospital recently welcomed a new addition to its surgical team – the da Vinci® Si Surgical System. Defined as robotic-assisted technology, the da Vinci has become widely known as being an effective alternative to both traditional "open" surgery and conventional minimally invasive laparoscopy. The potential patient benefits, include a shortened length of hospital stay, reduced risk of infection, significantly less blood loss, pain and scarring.

"The da Vinci is the most advanced form of minimally invasive surgery available," Tahoe Women's Care Gynecologist, Gary Willen said. "We've [Barton Memorial] been doing laparoscopic surgeries for a long time. The da Vinci allows us to perform surgery on some of the most difficult cases. It's incredibly precise, with its 3-D versus 2-D capabilities. It has three arms, where we only have two. The da Vinci also has a wrist with more motion than the human wrist, an advantage over traditional laparoscopic instruments, which are straight."

During a da Vinci operative procedure, the surgeon sits at a control console near the patient, while an assistant surgeon is at the patient's bedside. The surgeon sees the operative field through a video monitor and is able to manually control several robotic arms that replicate every movement of the surgeon's hand.

"Together, these technological advancements provide Barton with unparalleled precision, dexterity and control that enables a minimally invasive approach for complex surgical procedures," Dr. Willen added.

Along with Barton Memorial's dedicated da Vinci surgical team, Drs Willen and General Surgeon, Scott Welker, will be the first surgeons utilizing the da Vinci. Dr. Willen will perform complex hysterectomies and other urologic and gynecologic procedures and Dr. Welker will complete general surgical procedures, such as appendectomies, hernia and hiatal hernia repair, splenectomies, in addition to other advanced laparoscopy procedures.

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“As a community hospital, we strive to bring the most modern technologies to provide our patients more medical options,” Barton Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Clint Purvance said. “We believe that the new features of the da Vinci Si System will help us provide the best possible outcomes for our patients and is proof of our commitment to provide our community access to the latest advancements in minimally invasive surgery.”

The precision of this technology allows for an ideal procedure when addressing certain delicate or complex surgeries, because it makes it easier for surgeons to avoid surrounding nerves and organs.

“In general surgery, we will use the robot for a variety of procedures, including cholecystectomy, hernia and hiatal hernia repair,” Dr. Welker explained. “All of current procedures will be improved through the ability to use the wristed instruments and 3-D vision. Our operations will be much more precise than before. Also, by summertime we will add single-incision robotic surgery, which will allow us to do several operations via one-incision in the umbilicus [navel], which is nearly invisible after it heals.”

Gynecologists have adopted the da Vinci Surgical System for a range of gynecologic surgeries including hysterectomy and myomectomy. Five members of Barton’s surgical staff, including Drs Willen and Welker, are currently training on this remarkable technology. Both surgeons will complete their first procedures on March 14 and 15.

“I have been at Barton for nearly 30-years and was one of the first in the country to perform minimally invasive procedures, including laparoscopic hysterectomies,” Dr. Willen said. “We not only see this as an innovative option for gynecological and general surgical procedures, but an opportunity for Barton to expand its patient procedure base. For patients undergoing a hysterectomy, da Vinci provides quick recovery time, less blood loss and minimal scarring.”

For more information and to find out if you are a candidate for the robotic assisted surgery, please contact Barton Health at:

- Tahoe Women’s Care, Dr. Gary Willen: South Lake Tahoe: (530) 543-5710 or Carson City: (775) 267-6700. [www.tahoewomenscare.com/davinci](http://www.tahoewomenscare.com/davinci)
- Barton General Surgery, Dr. Scott Welker: (530) 543-5685
- [www.bartonhealth.org/daVinci](http://www.bartonhealth.org/daVinci)

***Meet the da Vinci® Si!***

Barton Memorial Hospital will host an open house in early April. The public will have the opportunity to meet the da Vinci surgical team and interact with the robotic system. For further information, please visit [bartonhealth.org/daVinci](http://bartonhealth.org/daVinci) (additional details will be posted by mid-March).

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**ATTENTION MEDIA:**

Please contact Rebecca Wass at (530) 543-5617 or (530) 318-6991 for media interviews and to meet da Vinci! Photos, b-roll and more information available.