

ON THE EDGE

Doctor using latest tech to battle cancer

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PHOENIXVILLE — Since the beginning of the year, Dr. Arthur Martella has used the da Vinci Surgical System to perform over 20 surgeries for the treatment of lung cancer at Phoenixville Hospital.

It is known that lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer death across the United States, killing more people than colon, breast and prostate cancers combined.

However, a new surgical technique pioneered at Phoenixville Hospital reduces surgical trauma and offers lung cancer victims their best hope for survival.

Martella is considered an industry leader in the use of robotic surgery for the treatment of lung cancer.

A cardiothoracic surgeon at Phoenixville Hospital, Martella is one of only a handful of surgeons across the country performing lung cancer procedures robotically using the da Vinci Surgical System.

“It was my goal when we started on this journey,” said Martella. “It was our initial goal when we began this process of doing a procedure for an early stage of lung cancer. It was a process of selecting smaller cases and building up to that point.”

The da Vinci Surgical System combines superior 3D visualization with greatly enhanced dexterity and smaller incisions.

For the surgeon, the system provides increased precision and better visualization than traditional open surgery. For the patient, surgery using the da Vinci technique means less blood loss, reduced pain and faster recoveries.

When lung cancer is detected at an early stage, surgery is the first line of

treatment. Slightly more than 40 percent of people diagnosed with lung cancer are still alive one year after their diagnosis, with about 27 percent still alive after two years.

Unfortunately, only about 15 percent of people diagnosed with lung cancer

survive this disease after five years. Early detection, however, provides the best opportunity for cure.

The majority of thoracic procedures—the repair of organs located in the thorax, or chest—are performed as open or thoracoscopic procedures.

Since early 2007, Martella has performed thoracic procedures using the da Vinci Surgical System.

“The tumor within the lung is removed,” he said. “Our approach is the same procedure as if it were an open surgery. We just don’t split the ribs.

“We remove some lymph nodes in this

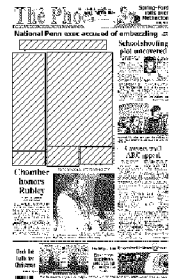
See EDGE, Page A2

area. We can determine the stage and what the patient’s prognosis or any further treatment. The procedure is about three hours, which isn’t as extensive as an open procedure.

It is significantly less invasive and post procedure stay is less.”

Minimally invasive robotic surgery provides a viable alternative to open procedures by allowing surgeons greater maneuverability of surgical instruments within the chest wall and patients, with reduced pain and recovery time.

“Patients with early or locally advanced lung cancer are good potential candidates for robotic-assisted thoracic procedures,” said Martella. “Our goal is to use the robot with all early stage lung cancer pa-



tients because this type of surgery may offer significant treatment benefits for cancers that are caught at this stage.

“Potential benefits for the patients who I treat using robotic surgery include decreased trauma to the body, reduced blood loss and need for transfusions, less post-operative pain and discomfort, less risk of infection, shorter hospi-

tal stay and faster recovery and return to normal daily activities.”

Martella said the next process for the robotics will simply be refinement of current procedures.

“We’re looking to refine some of the techniques being used,” he said. “We’ll begin to take out more advanced tumors and aggressive lymph nodes.”

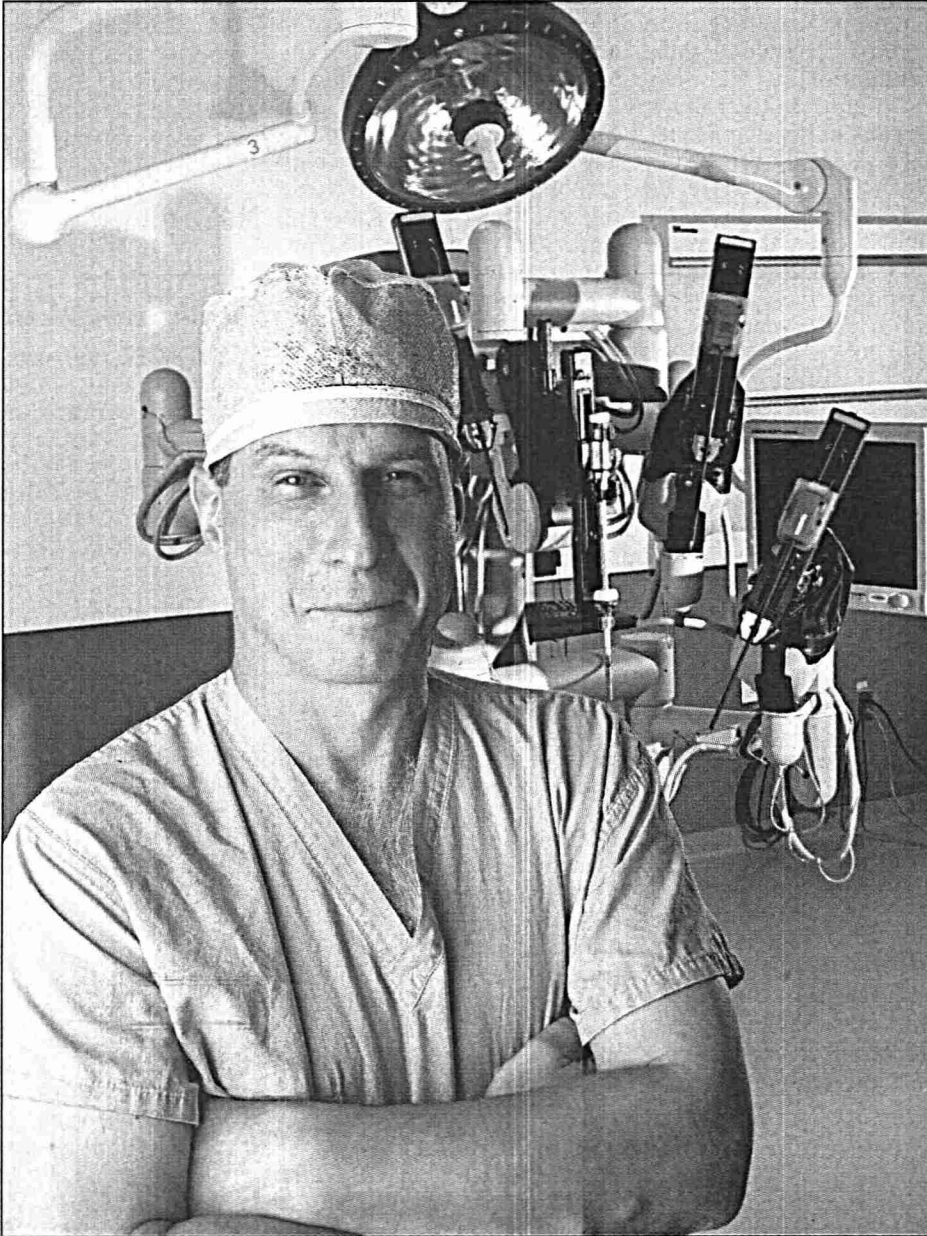


Photo provided

Dr. Arthur Martella is using the da Vinci Surgical System to battle lung cancer at Phoenixville Hospital.