

National Jewish Health and Saint Joseph Hospital Launch Robotic Bronchoscopy Program

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DENVER — National Jewish Health and Saint Joseph Hospital are among the first hospitals in the Rocky Mountain region to have minimally invasive robotic technology that enables physicians to obtain tissue samples from deep within the lung where 70 percent of nodules reside.



“It’s exciting to be able to offer patients with lung nodules an alternative to surgical biopsy,” said Ellen Volker, MD, MSPH, Director of Interventional Pulmonology at National Jewish Health and interventional pulmonologist at Saint Joseph Hospital. “Robotic bronchoscopy allows us to reach more types of lung nodules throughout the entirety of the lung, in one minimally invasive outpatient procedure.”

Dr. Volker explained that National Jewish Health and Saint Joseph Hospital are among the first in the U.S. to combine cone-beam CT technology with [robotic bronchoscopy](#) technology. Cone-beam CT allows the doctor to be even more accurate and precise while performing the lung biopsy.

“Our success rate in reaching and successfully obtaining a tissue sample from difficult-to-reach areas of the lung with robotic bronchoscopy and cone-beam CT is greater than 90 percent. Older technologies like electromagnetic navigation bronchoscopy had a success rate of only around 50 percent,” explained Dr. Volker. “This new technology is very good news for lung nodule patients, especially those who may have lung cancer.”

Lung cancer continues to be the leading cause of cancer-related death in men and women. Early detection of lung cancer is one of the best ways to have a successful outcome, but early-stage lung cancers tend to be small and difficult to reach. Robotic bronchoscopy allows physicians to diagnose and stage lung cancer in one minimally invasive procedure, rather than multiple procedures.

“As with all cancers, the sooner we can diagnose and stage lung cancer, the better the outcomes for the patients,” said Dr. Volker.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 121 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the [media resources page](#).

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