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**Minimally invasive surgery center at UT Southwestern  
one of only seven in North America gaining first-time accreditation**

DALLAS – Sept. 26, 2006 – UT Southwestern Medical Center’s Southwestern Center for Minimally Invasive Surgery is one of seven facilities across the United States and Canada, and the only one in Texas, to garner first-time accreditation from the American College of Surgeons for its \$2 million training lab.

The new accreditation standards are seen as an important step in improving training and reducing errors in the operating room. A 1999 Institute of Medicine study indicated that as many as 98,000 deaths annually may be attributed to medical error, and that many of those deaths are preventable. Complications related to surgery can triple the length of a hospital stay and increase costs by more than 600 percent, studies have shown.

“Our vision for the center is leadership in surgical education,” said Dr. Daniel J. Scott, director of the Center for Minimally Invasive Surgery at UT Southwestern, which, in addition to physician training, also provides top-quality patient care.

The center submitted more than 500 pages of documentation and passed the nation’s first on-site review of the new standards to earn accreditation, said Seifu Tesfay, the center’s manager. The American College of Surgeons is the largest national professional organization for surgeons, with more than 70,000 members. Its mission is to promote ethics and competency in surgery.

Traditional surgical training involved a “see it, do it, teach it” approach on patients, said Dr. Scott, assistant professor of surgery. But ethical, financial and efficiency pressures have helped simulation skills labs such as the one at UT Southwestern to gain acceptance. Rather than merely requiring a certain number of hours or repetitions, the simulation labs allow doctors, nurses and students to practice until they get it correct or are comfortable with the procedure – so called “proficiency-based” training.

Hundreds of students, nurses, residents and doctors from both UT Southwestern and other institutions complete skills training at the lab annually to learn or update skills such as maneuvering

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laparoscopic cameras or suturing. The Skills Lab, one of the largest, most comprehensive and longstanding labs in the nation, spans more than 5,000 square feet and features 21 endoscopic stations. It also includes teleconferencing capabilities that allow surgeons to watch and discuss surgical procedures as they are being performed.

Dr. Scott and his colleagues at the Southwestern Center are national leaders in developing, testing, teaching and researching the skills and techniques for minimally invasive surgeries. Dr. Scott pioneered curriculum development for five simulated laparoscopic exercises known as the “Southwestern Stations,” which are now being used at other institutions.

Research and input by Drs. Scott and Robert Rege, chairman of UT Southwestern’s surgery department, were instrumental in developing the new accreditation standards. Dr. Rege was a member of the national committee that approved the new standards.

Acceptance of minimally invasive surgical techniques, in which specialized endoscopic surgical tools are employed through tiny incisions that leave less scarring, has grown dramatically over the past few decades. Minimally invasive surgeries are employed in a wide range of specialties including endoscopic, gastric and bariatric surgeries, as well as urologic and OB-GYN procedures.

Laparoscopic procedures use a tiny video camera inserted through a small incision – often just an inch or two – that allows surgeons to navigate special surgical tools inside the body. The laparoscopic surgery techniques, Dr. Scott said, are particularly difficult to learn because of the diminished sensitivity of the long instruments, which move backward in relation to a surgeon’s hand movements, and the two-dimensional television monitor, which alters depth perception.

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