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News Release

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Community Hospital Now Offers SPY Imaging for Surgeries

Community Hospital is the only hospital on the Western Slope utilizing this innovative, specialized technology.

Mesa County, CO - Community Hospital is pleased to announce it is the first and only hospital on the Western Slope to use a new groundbreaking technology that is helping surgeons better visualize intricate anatomy during surgery. Courtney Fulton, MD, Fellowship Trained Breast and Melanoma Surgeon/General Surgeon with Community Hospital, has utilized the SPY imaging technique during breast cancer surgery, melanoma surgery and gallbladder surgery.

To improve outcomes in surgery, Dr. Fulton and other surgeons at Community Hospital have a new tool known as the SPY Portable Handheld Imaging System (SPY-PHI). This state-of-the-art device uses infrared fluorescence imaging to allow real-time measurement of tissue perfusion to help reduce complications during breast cancer surgery and other advanced surgeries. Fluorescence imaging has also been used successfully to identify when abnormal cancer cells migrate to nearby lymph nodes.

“SPY-PHI is a visually accurate tool that allows surgeons to see pathways much more vividly,” said Courtney Fulton, MD. “We are extremely fortunate to have access to this level of new technology on the Western Slope and we are very excited to offer it to patients at Community Hospital,” added Dr. Fulton.

In breast cancer patients, lymph node mapping is useful in determining whether cancer has spread to other parts of the body. It also helps the surgeon determine the stage of breast cancer as well as the best course of treatment to prevent recurrence.

By performing lymph node mapping using fluorescent imaging and SPY-PHI, a surgeon can precisely trace the lymphatic system to see if a cancer has metastasized. Typically, when breast cancer spreads away from a tumor, the first place it reaches is a sentinel lymph node in the underarm area.

Using fluorescent imaging technology, the surgeon injects a small amount of nontoxic indocyanine green (ICG) dye into or near the tumor in the breast, then traces its path using infrared light. Once the sentinel node is identified, the surgeon removes it and sends it to a pathologist for evaluation. If abnormal cells are not present in the sentinel node, then it is unlikely that other nodes are cancerous, reducing the need for further lymph node removal.

For more information on the services provided by Community Hospital, please call 970-242-0920 or visit www.YourCommunityHospital.com.

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