



# SAINT VINCENT HOSPITAL

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## **Saint Vincent Hospital Adopts Innovative Surgical Safety Technology** *System Will Detect & Prevent Retained Surgical Sponges, Gauze and Towels in OR Patients*

**Worcester, MA**—Saint Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts has joined a growing number of over 100 hospitals nationwide to add the RF Surgical Detection System to its surgical safety protocols. This patented and FDA-approved technology uses a scanning wand that detects and signals an alert if any radio frequency tagged surgical sponges remain in a patient following surgery.

Retained surgical objects are one of the leading patient safety concerns in U.S. hospitals and throughout the world. Published reports estimate they occur in one out of every 5,000 to 6,000 open cavity surgeries, making them the most frequent and costly of the "sentinel events"—medical errors that result in an unexpected death or a serious physical or psychological injury.

The implementation of the system is a direct outcome of the hospital's recent patient safety initiative. In a statement released on April 9, 2009, Saint Vincent Hospital's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Octavio Diaz, announced that the hospital was taking an aggressive approach in reviewing its policies and protocols, as well as investigating new technologies that mitigate medical risks—all with the goal of optimizing patient safety.

"We have taken a proactive approach to preventing retained sponges by utilizing the RF Surgical Detection System in all our surgical areas. This includes open-cavity surgeries in the OR, Labor and Delivery and in our Electro-Physical Lab for pacemaker and ICD implants. Our surgeons and nurses have been impressed by the system's ease of use and its detection accuracy and range. It not only safeguards the patient, but provides the entire surgical team with the assurance that no surgical sponge has been left behind."

In over 100,000 surgical procedures across the country, the RF Surgical Detection System has proven its sponge detection and prevention capabilities," said Gary Blackbourn, V.P. Marketing and Sales for RF Surgical Systems, Inc. "Several dozen near miss incidents have been reported to us where the system effectively prevented a dangerous medical error by alerting the OR team of the presence of a sponge still inside the patient. The system has also been instrumental in helping find missing sponges elsewhere in the OR to help rectify counts. At less than \$15 per surgical case, hospitals like Saint Vincent Hospital are finding the RF Surgical Detection System is an extremely cost-effective investment in patient safety."

**About Saint Vincent Hospital**—Saint Vincent Hospital is an acute care hospital providing general and tertiary medical services to residents of Worcester and Central Massachusetts. From newborns to seniors, Saint Vincent Hospital has a wide-range of inpatient and outpatient services, including open-heart surgery, cardiovascular medicine, radiation oncology, and pediatric services. Saint Vincent Hospital was founded by the Sisters of Providence and has a 114-year tradition of providing quality healthcare. It was the first hospital in Central Massachusetts to offer robotically assisted surgical procedures and minimally invasive, computer-assisted joint replacements. To learn more, visit [www.stvincenthospital.com](http://www.stvincenthospital.com).

**About the RF Surgical Detection System**—The system consists of three components, which include the 24-hour reusable Blair-Port Wand® connected to a compact, self-calibrating console (provided free of charge) and a micro RF tag. The micro RF tag is embedded into a variety of surgical gauze, sponges and towels. When the system is activated and the wand is passed over a patient prior to closing procedures, an audible and visual alarm would immediately signal the presence of any retained object(s) fitted with a tag. The technology will not replace any other surgical procedure currently practiced in the OR, but will provide additional patient safety precautions. The RF Surgical Detection System was developed by RF Surgical Systems, Inc. of Bellevue Washington.

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