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## Vanguard Urologic Institute First to Implant AxoGen's Avance Nerve Graft Using a Robot for Cavernous Nerve Repair

ALACHUA, Fla.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--In 2007, more than 200,000 men were newly diagnosed with prostate cancer, with many of them undergoing radical prostatectomies. During a radical prostatectomy, care is taken to remove the cancer and the prostate while preserving the surrounding nerves. The cavernous nerves, which lie next to the prostate, are essential for erectile function, and to a lesser degree, urinary continence.

Dr. Kevin Slawin and Dr. Tung Shu, founders of the new Vanguard Urologic Institute in Houston, TX, have been at the forefront of developing minimally invasive techniques using the da Vinci System to perform radical prostatectomies in patients with prostate cancer while minimizing damage to the surrounding tissues. Their results confirm excellent cancer control rates, equivalent to the standard open approach to radical prostatectomy, accompanied by a decreased length of stay, and decreased morbidity as measured by a more rapid recovery of both potency and continence.

However, when the cancer has spread beyond the prostate, oftentimes one or both of the cavernous nerves have to be partially or completely removed in order to improve the chances of achieving a "negative surgical margin" indicating complete removal of the cancer. Typically, these nerves are left unrepaired. However, institutions like the Vanguard Urologic Institute are offering nerve grafting to repair these nerves at the time of prostatectomy, thus providing patients with prostate cancer an increased hope of having sexual potency after the procedure.

The Vanguard Urologic Institute is the first center in the US to use AxoGen's Avance Nerve Grafts to repair the cavernous nerves robotically. Since their first case in January 2008, they have performed both unilateral and bilateral cavernous nerve repairs.

"We have previously published our results demonstrating the improved outcomes with respect to both continence and potency in men who require neurovascular bundle resection, either unilateral or bilateral, who undergo sural nerve graft procedures at the time of their initial surgery. The availability of Avance Nerve Graft now allows us to perform this procedure without removing autologous sural nerve from the patient, which is associated with loss of sensation and even occasional pain at the donor site. The ease of handling and the superior length of Avance Nerve Graft has made it the preferred graft material for our doctors when performing cavernosal nerve graft reconstruction in men undergoing prostatectomy for locally advanced disease," states Dr. Kevin M. Slawin, Director, Vanguard Urologic Institute and the Texas Prostate Center.

Avance Nerve Graft allows injured peripheral nerves to be repaired using allograft nerve; thus, enabling axon regrowth and eventual restoration of sensation and function to those effected nerves. Avance Nerve Graft is a breakthrough in nerve technology. It provides an environment for nerve fiber regeneration by having a biological support structure with inherent growth promoters. Avance Nerve Graft is decellularized, enabling guided nerve regeneration without immunosuppression.

"At the Vanguard Urologic Institute, we are constantly looking for new technologies that can help us improve the care we provide our patients. Avance Nerve Graft has allowed us to capture the benefits of nerve grafting in select cases undergoing radical prostatectomy while eliminating the potential side effects of using autologous sural nerve for the graft."

says Dr. Tung Shu, Director, Endourology and Minimally Invasive Surgery at the Vanguard Urologic Institute.

### **About Doctors at Vanguard Urologic Institute**

The Doctors at the Vanguard Urologic Institute is located in Houston, TX. "Vanguard" is defined as "any creative group active in the innovation and application of new concepts and techniques, and occupying the position of greatest advancement or leading position in any given field". Consistent with their name, the mission of the Vanguard Urologic Institute is to embrace new ideas and technologies in science and medicine, bringing the best of them to their patients.

Visit The Doctors at the Vanguard Urologic Institute at: [www.vanguardurology.com](http://www.vanguardurology.com)

### **About AxoGen, Inc.**

AxoGen, Inc., founded in 2002 and based in Alachua, Florida, is a privately held company pioneering the commercialization of peripheral nerve grafting and nerve regeneration technologies. AxoGen is focused on the advancement of peripheral nerve repair by developing superior technologies for surgeons to help patients with peripheral nerve injuries.

Visit AxoGen at: [www.axogeninc.com](http://www.axogeninc.com)

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