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RUHS – Medical Center Harnesses New Technology for Improved Lung Procedures

MORENO VALLEY - (July 28, 2025) – Doctors at Riverside University Health System – Medical Center (RUHS-MC) are harnessing the power of robots and advanced precision tools to make lung surgeries safer and more precise, and speed recovery time for patients.

Robotic bronchoscopy is being used to detect cancer at an earlier stage, and cryotherapy allows doctors to more easily remove lung obstructions. Both techniques lessen the likelihood of complications during lung procedures.

“RUHS – Medical Center is fortunate to have innovative tools at its disposal to bring the best possible care to patients facing airway obstructions and conditions,” said Danny de la Peña, Director of Cardiopulmonary Services. “Our dedicated team at RUHS-MC is excited to embrace these new technologies and ensure efficient, high-quality respiratory care.”

An Ion robotic bronchoscopy device gives RUHS providers a safer way to access hard-to-reach nodules that could be cancerous, said Dr. Walter Klein, a pulmonologist. A robotic arm guides a catheter – a thin tube – with a camera, light and shape-sensing technology through the bronchial tube and into the outer edges of the lungs, where it takes samples of suspicious nodules.

Previously, doctors had to conduct a CT-guided biopsy where a needle was placed through the chest wall and into the lung, which carried about a 20% risk of lung collapse.

Pulmonologists can also ultrasound and biopsy lymph nodes in the center of a patient’s chest during the same visit for a complete assessment of cancer severity and spread.

“Patients who are diagnosed with advanced lung cancer have exceptionally high mortality rates and associated complications with chemotherapy and radiation,” Klein said. “Utilizing this advanced technology allows us to diagnose patients with early-stage lung cancer who may then be candidates for surgical cure of their lung cancer.”

The Erbe cryotherapy system at RUHS uses extreme cold to help remove foreign objects, mucus plugs and blood clots from the lungs easily and with reduced risk of complications, according to de la Peña.

Previously, doctors used a wire basket-like device to pull objects from a patient’s lungs, but this could take several attempts and created a risk of pushing those items deeper into the lung. Freezing the objects makes their removal easy and shortens recovery time.

The device has successfully been used to remove food cartilage and blood clots from patients’ lungs.

In addition to freezing, the Erbe system also has an electrotherapy function that uses extreme heat to quickly stop bleeding in the lung.

The purchase of the Erbe device was supported by the RUHS Foundation.

“We’re grateful for our partnership with the RUHS Foundation and excited for all the possibilities cryotherapy and electrotherapy offer,” de la Peña said. “RUHS continues to make strides toward improved surgical procedures all the time.”

Learn more about RUHS and the services it provides: [RUHealth.org](https://www.ruhealth.org).

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About the Riverside County Water Safety Coalition

Riverside University Health System (RUHS) includes a 439-bed Medical Center in Moreno Valley, Calif., 14 Federally Qualified Community Health Centers, and the departments of Public and Behavioral Health. RUHS is Riverside County’s safety net provider, offering high-quality, patientcentered care. With more than 8,000 staff members and over 125 years of experience, RUHS continues its commitment to and legacy of delivering exceptional, compassionate care with a focus on public health, behavioral health, community wellness, and medical education. Visit [ruhealth.org](https://www.ruhealth.org) to learn more.