

# Are Remote Presence Robots in Your Nursing Career Future?

**According to Debi Sampsel, MSN, RN, executive director for the Nursing Institute of West Central Ohio, robotic telemedicine will continue to expand into nursing education and in the healthcare settings. Depending on where you currently attend nursing school or work, you may already have encountered the remote presence robot.**

Developed by InTouch Health from Santa Barbara, California, the Remote Presence Robotic System (RP-7) allows nursing faculty members to interact with students from remote locations. It also allows physicians and nurses to provide patient assessments, consultations, mentoring and coaching via the robot. The robot serves as a physical presence for the professional who remotely located in another geographical location. Dialogues, patient care consultations, instructions, and assessments can be completed through this enabling technology.

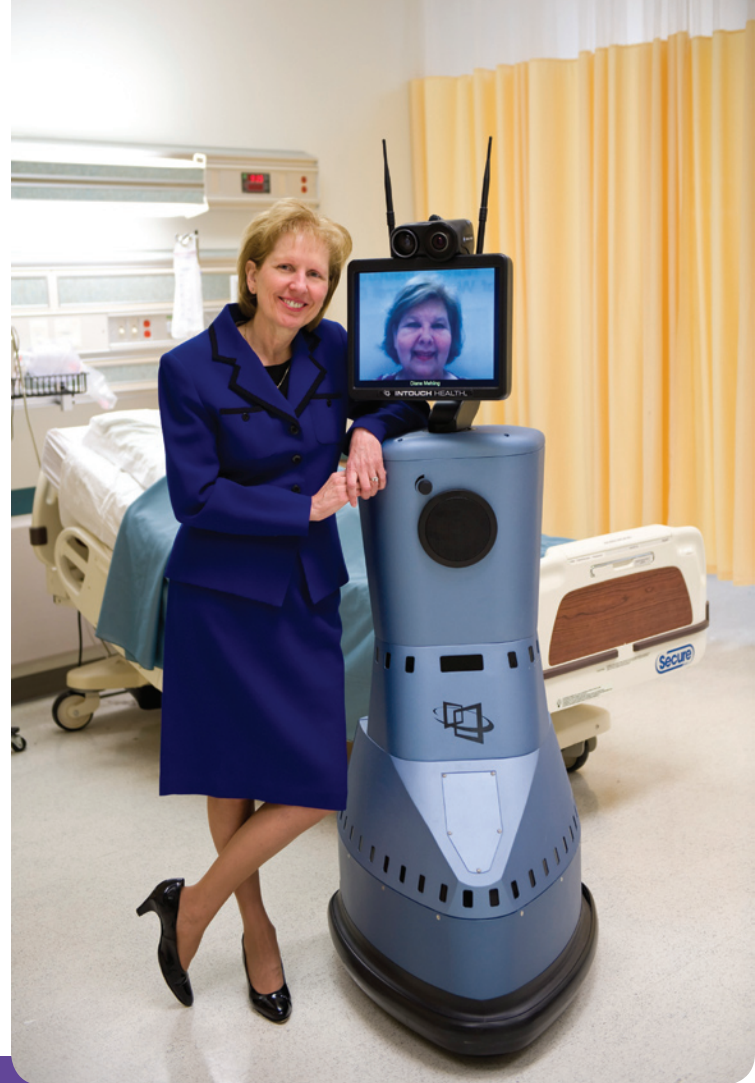
The Nursing Institute, headquartered at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio, has been conducting research and program design with the RP-7 since unveiling the new addition to the regional nursing education in June 2007. Debi Sampsel, co-principle investigator for the first global nursing education remote presence robot program, research developed the study. It explores the use of the robot technology in programs of nursing as a way to retain the brain trust of aging nurse faculty while allowing them to physically be removed from the educational setting. The aging workforce, both in education and in the healthcare organizations is one of largest challenges that are contributing to the shortage of seasoned nurses. As baby boomer nurses approach retirement, this technology will provide them with a new career option. This cutting edge technology makes it possible for nursing faculty with chronic disorders or physical impairments to continue to contribute to nursing education and clinical care. The RP-7 is an innovative way to address the need for seasoned nurses to remain at the side of the nursing students and novice direct care nurses. Sampsel said, "that she had the good fortune as a Vice President of Clinical to utilize an InTouch Health remote presence robot in a clinical setting." She "observed the benefits that it could have for education, staff interactions, chart reviews, care team and resident communications." Years later, Ms. Sampsel, a geriatric clinical nurse specialist, started exploring potential solutions to the impending crisis of the aging workforce creating a "critical thinking and competency drain" from nursing

and education. The goal is to address a burgeoning national workforce problem and to create new approaches for retaining seasoned workers to interact with the new generation of nursing students. Newly licensed nurses and returning nurses are both essential to maintain high quality of care and patient safety. The thought that maybe the remote presence robot (RP7) could be the technology bridge between seasoned and novice nurses led to the design of the faculty remote presence research study.

## About the Nursing Institute of West Central Ohio:

The Nursing Institute was established in 2004 in an effort to keep the growing nursing shortage from crippling the health care of the region. With a mission of recruiting and retaining nurses, the Institute brings together nurses, administrators, educators and employers from a 16-county area in West Central Ohio. The Institute is headquartered at Wright State.

The exploratory robot research study provided seasoned faculty hands-on experience with the robot as a faculty extender. It also allowed the student nurses the opportunity to provide their experiences and impressions with the robot faculty encounters. First to fourth year



**Debi Sampsel, Executive Director of the Nursing Institute of West Central Ohio, and the robot.**

level students from associate, community, and baccalaureate programs were included in the study. The students overall impressions were favorable. The faculty overall impressions were favorable as well. The myth that older nurses would not embrace the computerized robot control station was soon dispelled by the ease in which the faculty mastered the robot controls and conducted their classes. The study was conducted in the Wright State University's nursing human patient simulation room. The simulated patient added a dimension to the faculty-student technological encounters as well. At the conclusion of the study it was determined that the robot had both clinical and educational value for the future of nursing,

In the immediate future, the robot will be used to bring together nursing and engineering professionals from various locations in the world to experience intellectual exchanges and cultural diversity exchanges. The nurses will also be using the robot and control station to communicate with physicians.