

# STANDING TALL

## XLIF SPINE SURGERY HELPS AREA PATIENT

**Jerry Swearingen**, a 64-year-old mechanic and heavy equipment operator, had come to the conclusion that his back had worn out. Having suffered increasingly intense leg pain for over four years, he was no longer able to do his job.

“My job requires a lot of lifting and climbing. My pain just kept getting worse and worse to the point I couldn’t even pick anything up. My back just wore out,” Swearingen said.

He had watched one of his friends go through back surgery and several months of recovery—an experience he was reluctant to undergo. So when his physician suggested a new, more effective and minimally invasive alternative to traditional back surgery, he was greatly relieved.

Recently introduced by neurosurgeon, Dr. Ildemaro Volcan and orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Allan Goodrich, eXtreme Lateral Interbody Fusion (XLIF) is available exclusively through the Spine Center at Doctors Hospital Human Motion Institute.

**“The XLIF spine surgery is a major improvement to traditional spine surgery in so many ways,” Dr. Volcan said. “Aside from being minimally invasive, and less painful with a faster**

**recovery time, this procedure can actually correct and restore normal anatomy to patients suffering from conditions such as degenerative scoliosis—an achievement not usually associated with traditional surgical procedures.”**

Unlike traditional spine surgeries, XLIF surgery accesses the spine through the patient's side therefore avoiding disruption and possible damage to major back muscles and tissue. Equally important to its effectiveness, the procedure is performed with X-ray type equipment and the aid of a “nerve avoidance” monitoring system to prevent possible nerve damage. Requiring only two tiny incisions—on the patient’s side and back—patients are often walking within 7-12 hours and usually hospitalized only one to two days.

“I could tell the difference immediately after surgery,” Swearingen said. “Within six weeks I was back to work.”

Today Swearingen said he has no pain and no trouble climbing, although he still isn’t comfortable sitting for long periods. He said he’s especially grateful he was able to avoid the long and difficult recovery he had seen other friends endure after traditional back surgery.

About eight in ten Americans will experience a life-style altering episode of back pain at some point in their lives. Like Swearingen, 90% of single episodes of back pain become recurrent. The Spine Center at Doctors Hospital Human Motion Institute specializes in preventing back injuries as well as providing relief for back pain and spinal disorders. Applying clinical expertise to establish an accurate diagnosis quickly, our skilled team helps patients develop a care plan that fits their diagnosis—exhausting every appropriate treatment option before considering surgery. Our Doctors Hospital Rehab Health Centers are conveniently located throughout the Augusta area to provide a variety of physical therapy services to help patients regain spine health. And if surgery should become necessary, we have highly trained and experienced spine surgeons on staff.

To learn more about XLIF spine surgery or for more information on other spine disorder treatments, visit [www.doctors-hospital.net](http://www.doctors-hospital.net) or call The Human Motion Institute Spine Line at 706.651.2449.

