

# Robots let doctors 'beam' into remote hospitals

November 17 2013, by Terence Chea

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(AP)—The doctor isn't in, but he can still see you now.

Remote presence robots are allowing physicians to "beam" themselves into hospitals to diagnose patients and offer [medical advice](#) during emergencies.

A growing number of hospitals are using telemedicine robots to expand access to medical specialists, especially in [rural areas](#) where there's a shortage of doctors.

Dignity Health, which runs Arizona, California and Nevada hospitals, began using the telemedicine machines five years ago to quickly diagnose patients suspected of suffering strokes.

The San Francisco-based health [care provider](#) now uses telemedicine machines in emergency rooms and intensive-care units at 20 California hospitals.

Earlier this year, Santa Barbara-based InTouch Health launched the RP-VITA, a remote presence robot approved for hospital use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

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