



« Ron Miller meets with Monmouth Medical Center surgeon **Stephen Chagares, M.D.**, following his robotic-assisted laparoscopic hernia repair.

Region's first robotic hernia repair brings quicker recovery—less pain

RON MILLER, 54, has had his share of medical surprises. In 2010, for instance, his appendix burst while he was vacationing in Mexico, leading to emergency surgery at a local clinic.

Back home in Marlboro, he was found to have multiple hernias—including one related to his appendectomy performed in Mexico. But he got one nice surprise: Ron was able to have minimally invasive, robotic hernia repair right here at Monmouth Medical Center—without needing to go to New York City.

Ron's medical odyssey began shortly after that fateful family holiday. Once home, his appendectomy wound became infected, and he went into septic shock — a potentially fatal condition caused by a body-wide infection.

He turned to board-certified Monmouth Medical Center surgeon Stephen Chagares, M.D., who drained the infection with a Wound Vac. The wound took weeks to heal, and then a hernia developed at the site—a common

occurrence after a serious wound infection. Fast forward to 2014. Ron made an appointment with Dr. Chagares for a reevaluation of his hernia, and a consultation for gallbladder disease. A CT scan revealed that Ron actually had three hernias: one at the site of the appendectomy, one where he'd had his prostate removed, and one by his belly button—known as an umbilical hernia.

Ron was thrilled to learn that Dr. Chagares offered state-of-the-art robotic hernia repair, right in his community. After careful analysis, Dr. Chagares mapped

out a two-stage plan to treat the three hernias and remove Ron's gallbladder.

During the surgery, Dr. Chagares used the umbilical hernia as an access point to insert instruments, remove the gallbladder, and then fix the hernia “on the way out.” While performing surgery, Dr. Chagares analyzed the other two hernias related to the previous prostate

removal and appendectomy, so he could plan the next operation. For stage two, Dr. Chagares performed a robotic assisted laparoscopic hernia repair of the hernia at the prior appendectomy site—a first for the region.

“Because of Ron's prior infection, it was difficult to evaluate [the hernia]—even with the CT scan,” says Dr. Chagares.

“The robotic-assisted surgery allows for a more precise, less invasive approach, enabling me to suture the inside of the abdominal muscle back together. A laparoscopic approach would have required anchoring sutures through the muscle wall and the addition of anchoring tacks,” according to Dr. Chagares who notes that patient benefits of robotic surgery include less pain and quicker recovery.

Ron's robotic procedure went extremely well and he went home the same day as the procedure and just 10 days later was back to work selling cars at the Cadillac dealership in North Brunswick. Once healed, he had minimal scarring.

“People need to know that they can get advanced robotic surgery at Monmouth Medical Center—there's no need to travel to New York City.”

“Dr. Chagares is an incredible surgeon with a great bedside manner,” says Ron. “I have a lot of confidence in him, and only wish Dr. Chagares could have performed my previous emergency appendectomy robotically. People need to know that they can get advanced robotic surgery at Monmouth Medical Center—there's no need to travel to New York City.”