



Intuitive Surgical Reports New Employee Option Grants for December, 2011

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SUNNYVALE, Calif., Dec 9, 2011 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX) --

Intuitive Surgical, Inc. (Nasdaq:ISRG) today reported that equity awards approved by the Compensation Committee of the Board of Directors, which consists entirely of Independent Directors, were made to 28 new employees. Pursuant to NASDAQ Marketplace Rule 5635(c)(4), the equity awards were granted under the Intuitive Surgical, Inc. 2009 Commencement Incentive Plan, which the Board of Directors of Intuitive Surgical, Inc. adopted for the granting of equity awards to new employees. In accordance with NASDAQ rules, these grants were made under an equity incentive plan without shareholder approval. NASDAQ rules require a public announcement of equity awards to be made under this type of plan. 28 employees were granted options to purchase an aggregate of 27,270 shares of the Company's common stock. The options vest over four years and expire in 10 years assuming continued employment. No officers received any award under this plan. The exercise price for the option shares granted is \$439.88, which was the closing price of Intuitive Surgical, Inc.'s common stock on the NASDAQ Global Market as such price was reported by NASDAQ on December 7, 2011. The Company's policy is to issue stock option grants to new employees on the fifth business day of every calendar month. This announcement complies with the applicable NASDAQ rule requiring disclosure of such an inducement grant.

About Intuitive Surgical, Inc.

Intuitive Surgical, Inc. (Nasdaq:ISRG), headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, is the global technology leader in robotic-assisted, minimally invasive surgery. Intuitive Surgical develops, manufactures and markets robotic technologies designed to improve clinical outcomes and help patients return more quickly to active and productive lives. The Company's mission is to extend the benefits of minimally invasive surgery to the broadest possible base of patients. Intuitive Surgical - Taking surgery beyond the limits of the human hand(TM).

About the da Vinci(R) Surgical System

The da Vinci(R) System is a breakthrough surgical platform designed to enable complex surgery using a minimally invasive approach. The da Vinci(R) System consists of an ergonomic surgeon console, a patient-side cart with four interactive robotic arms, a high-performance vision system and proprietary EndoWrist(R) instruments. Powered by state-of-the-art robotic and computer technology, the da Vinci(R) System is designed to scale, filter and seamlessly translate the surgeon's hand movements into more precise movements of the EndoWrist(R) instruments. The net result is an intuitive interface with breakthrough surgical capabilities. By providing surgeons with superior visualization, enhanced dexterity, greater precision and ergonomic comfort, the da Vinci Surgical System makes it possible for more surgeons to perform minimally invasive procedures involving complex dissection or reconstruction. This ultimately has the potential to raise the standard of care for complex surgeries, translating into numerous potential patient benefits, including less pain, a shorter recovery and quicker return to normal daily activities.

Intuitive(R), da Vinci(R), da Vinci S(R), da Vinci(R) Si(TM), InSite(R) and EndoWrist(R) are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intuitive Surgical, Inc.

For more information, please visit the company's web site at www.intuitivesurgical.com.

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