Robotic surgery helps fire chief return to duty

INTRO: Firefighters rush into danger to help others. But when 61-year-old Fargo, North Dakota, Fire Chief Gary Lorenz unexpectedly learned he had kidney cancer, he needed help himself.

He credits Mayo Clinic's coordinated care, expertise and innovation with treating his cancer and helping him return to his life and his work quickly.

Jason Howland has his story.

VIDEO	AUDIO
04:25 **Gary Lorenz** **Fire Chief** **Fargo, North Dakota**	"Firefighters are problem solvers. We get calls all the time, and when they don't know who to send, they send the fire department."
Jason	But last fall, it was Fire Chief Gary Lorenz who suddenly needed help with a medical emergency of his own.
04:50 Gary	"It just seemed big, you know, something that I'd never had to deal with before."
Jason	A routine scan for an unrelated health concern revealed two likely cancerous tumors on one kidney.
21:44 Gary	"When you find out that quickly and that unexpectedly, it was very scary."
NATS OFFICE	"Good afternoon. Good to see you. How have you been?"
Jason	Within days of his diagnosis, Gary was scheduled at Mayo Clinic for a radical nephrectomy, a complete removal of the affected kidney.
06:00 **Aaron Potretzke, M.D.** **Urology** **Mayo Clinic**	"You have this, you know, in every sense of the word, this hero of his community —
06:22 Dr. Potretzke	somebody who is not often afraid or hesitant to rush into situations that are dangerous to help people."

08:04 Dr. Potretzke	"In this case there just wasn't really any way to remove just the tumors and leave the rest of the kidney behind."
Jason	Because the tumors couldn't safely be removed while preserving the kidney, Mayo Clinic urologist Dr. Aaron Potretzke performed a robotic-assisted kidney removal surgery.
09:40 **Dr. Potretzke**	"Which is a form of minimally invasive surgery — so smaller incisions."
Jason	Across Mayo Clinic, patients and care teams have benefited from robotic-assisted surgery for decades. Mayo recently marked its 100,000th procedure assisted by the da Vinci robot. This milestone reflects the experience of surgical teams and their commitment to expanding minimally invasive options for patients, including new approaches to cancer and transplant surgery.
Mara Piltin, D.O. **Surgical Oncology** **Mayo Clinic** **01:50**	"I think it's a tool in the toolkit. Robotic-assisted surgery allows us to have enhanced 3D visualization, have good technical dexterity, enhanced precision during surgery."
Michelle Nguyễn, M.D. **Transplant Surgery** **Mayo Clinic** **04:10**	"With the great visualization as well as the technical precision with the robot, there's less surgical trauma as well. And so that potentially allows the patient to recover faster, have less pain, have less risk of wound complications, and just be able to return to their normal life more quickly."
Dr. Potretzke **12:25**	"The robot doesn't do anything autonomously, so it requires the manipulation by the bedside team and then also the use of the robotic instruments in the console by the surgeons."
Dr. Piltin **08:04**	"I think the real takeaways are that we are improving patient outcomes, we're enhancing minimally invasive surgery, and we're providing really high-quality care for really complex diseases."
Jason	After one night in the hospital, Gary returned home….
Gary **13:57**	"I never had any pain, I never had discomfort. I never took a single pain pill."

Jason	Just four days after surgery, Gary was back at the fire station doing what he loves — serving his community. Today, there is no evidence of remaining cancer.
Gary **20:13**	"To get, you know, the best care, world-class care, right? It's what people hope for."
Jason	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.