

Andrew Cannestra MD PhD Advocates for Responsible Spine Surgery and Patient Education

Nationally recognized neurosurgeon calls for greater awareness of minimally invasive care and patient-first surgical decision-making



Jacksonville, Florida Jan 12, 2026 (IssueWire.com) - Andrew Cannestra MD PhD, a board-certified neurosurgeon and nationally respected leader in minimally invasive spine surgery, is speaking out to raise awareness about the importance of **responsible surgical care** and **informed decision-making** for patients facing spinal conditions.

As a fellowship-trained spine surgeon with deep expertise in spinal cord injury and robotic-assisted surgery, Andrew Cannestra MD PhD has seen the impact that thoughtful, personalized care can have—not only on outcomes, but on patients' lives.

"Not every patient needs surgery. And those who do deserve a plan that's tailored to their condition and goals," said Dr. Cannestra. "The goal is not just to fix the spine. It's to restore the ability to walk, to work, to live without chronic pain."

Calling Attention to a Growing Issue

Spine surgery rates have increased in the U.S., with some procedures seeing double-digit growth in the past decade. According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, **spinal fusion surgeries alone have increased by over 60% since 2004**.

However, experts warn that **not all procedures are necessary**, and in some cases, patients may be rushed into invasive treatments without a clear understanding of the alternatives, risks, or long-term goals.

“Surgery should never be a first resort,” said Andrew Cannestra, MD, PhD. “We need more focus on patient education, conservative options, and only using surgery when it’s truly the best path forward.”

Minimally Invasive Care for Faster Recovery

Andrew Cannestra, MD, PhD, is a founding member of the Society for Minimally Invasive Spinal Surgery and has helped lead programs that combine robotics with minimally invasive techniques. These approaches can result in:

- **Smaller incisions**
- **Reduced hospital stays**
- **Lower complication rates**
- **Faster return to daily life**

“The smaller the incision, the smaller the disruption to the body,” Andrew Cannestra MD PhD, explains. “My approach is always to do the least amount of harm while solving the problem effectively. That’s what gives people the best chance to get back to the life they want.”

What Patients Can Do Right Now

Andrew Cannestra MD PhD is encouraging patients across the country to take an active role in their own care and decision-making. His call to action is focused on **awareness, research, and asking the right questions** when seeing a spine specialist.

Here’s what he recommends:

- **Ask about alternatives** before agreeing to surgery
- **Get a second opinion**, especially for major procedures
- **Understand your condition fully**—not just the symptoms, but the cause
- **Look for surgeons who specialize** in minimally invasive techniques
- **Focus on goals**, not just pain relief—ask how the treatment will help you return to normal life

“The most successful outcomes happen when the patient is part of the decision—not just the recipient of it,” said Andrew Cannestra, MD PhD.

Raising the Bar for Care

With more than two decades in neurosurgery, Andrew Cannestra, MD PhD continues to advocate for thoughtful care across the system. As former Director of the Baptist Robotic Spine Surgery Program and a Diplomate of the American Board of Neurologic Surgery, he believes the future of spine care lies in **precision, responsibility, and empathy**.

“We’re not just treating bones and nerves. We’re helping people regain function, dignity, and confidence,” he said. “That starts with making smart choices, one patient at a time.”

About Andrew Cannestra MD PhD

Dr. Cannestra is a fellowship-trained spine surgeon specializing in spinal cord injury and minimally invasive spine surgery. He is a founding member of the Society for Minimally Invasive Spinal Surgery and holds leadership roles in multiple national organizations. He is known for combining cutting-edge technology with patient-centered care to improve mobility, reduce chronic pain, and shorten recovery times.

Call to Action

Patients facing spinal issues are encouraged to **ask more, learn more, and expect more** from their care providers. Awareness is the first step. Ask questions. Seek options. Choose care that respects your life—not just your spine.

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