

SPRING 2004

RMCC adds physicians and services to local communities

RMCC Brings First Mobile PET/CT to Colorado

The Rocky Mountain PET Institute continues to expand with the recent addition of a powerful new mobile diagnostic imaging system called PET/CT – the first of its kind to serve the Denver metropolitan area and Colorado Springs.



PET/CT combines the benefits of two proven technologies to more accurately diagnose and locate cancers while decreasing the need for multiple tests. The PET/CT unit allows physicians to perform two tests – a positron emission tomography (PET) scan and a computed tomography (CT) scan – in one session without having to move the patient.

By enhancing the ability of physicians to diagnose cancer at earlier stages, PET/CT scans better define the stages of cancerous tumors, helping to identify the best treatment options for patients.

“A PET/CT scan helps physicians answer critical questions in a single exam, saving valuable time,” said John Gerhold, M.D., medical director for the Rocky Mountain PET Institute. “Clinical research has shown that in comparison to a PET or CT scan alone, PET/CT technology provides a level of information that can change a patient’s treatment plan to better target cancerous tumors.”

The PET/CT system provides RMCC with another tool in its fight against cancer. As the only Colorado cancer center to offer the mobile PET/CT, RMCC continues to remain on the cutting-edge of medical care by bringing quality cancer care directly to Colorado’s local communities.

Mobile PET/CT is currently available in Aurora, Colorado Springs, Littleton and Denver - Midtown.

Rocky Mountain Blood and Marrow Transplant Center Expands

2004 is a year of expansion for the Rocky Mountain Blood and Marrow Transplant Program. With the addition of two new physicians, an expansion of facilities and an increased commitment to service outlying areas, the center is poised for unprecedented growth.



A partnership between RMCC – Midtown and Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Medical Center (PSL), the Rocky Mountain Blood and Marrow Transplant Program was founded by Robert Rifkin, MD, in 1991. This unique partnership, which is one of the few programs to offer comprehensive transplant services in a community setting, is the only transplant program in Colorado to offer bone marrow and stem

cell transplants from donors.

The transplant program cares for adults, providing both allogeneic and autologous transplants. In allogeneic transplants a patient receives a transplant from a sibling or other unrelated donor while an autologous transplant is when a patient is a self-donor. The program also provides a variety of other services to cancer patients and their families, including excellent support services and access to cutting-edge research.

Typically, the center performs 70 transplants a year. But with the addition of internationally known transplant specialists Drs. Scott Bearman and Peter McSweeney, the number of transplants is expected to increase by 50 percent. Dr. Bearman is focusing his research on using stem cell transplants for novel therapies. Dr. McSweeney, a national leader in autoimmune and non-myeloablative transplants, is focusing his research on novel therapies for graft versus host disease prophylaxis and management. Both will increase the center’s scope, enabling it to perform transplants for more diseases as well as participate in more clinical trials.

In addition to performing more transplants, the center’s facilities are also expanding. This June RMCC, will open a new outpatient facility which will double its space. PSL will also add an additional eight inpatient beds and will also expand the collection and cell processing facilities.

Besides expanding services and facilities, the center is expanding its outreach to include other sites beyond its current service in Grand Junction, the Vail Valley and Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

"Our program aims to make the patient as comfortable as possible," said Dr. Rifkin. "Whether it is in the hospital or for daily visits at the outpatient clinic, our biggest advance has been to make things more convenient for patients."

Prior to a patient starting the transplant there is a thorough education process. The idea is that the more information patients receive, the less intimidating the transplant process is. "RMCC is committed to educating patients and their families," said Dr. Rifkin. "We give patients and families a support system, so that they have all the care they need."

The Rocky Mountain Blood and Marrow Transplant Program is staffed to support patients in all aspects of the transplant process. The transplant team includes five transplant physicians, two nurse practitioners, a full-time psychologist, and nutrition and social service consultants.

A Letter from the President

As we start to enjoy the warmer weather and longer days of the season, we also look forward to all that 2004 holds for Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers, its physicians and employees. 2004 has already been marked by growth.

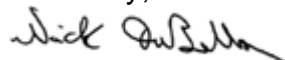
Recently, RMCC brought the first mobile PET/CT to the Rocky Mountain region. Servicing Colorado Springs and metropolitan Denver, this technology helps physicians to diagnose cancer in its earliest stages and to better monitor the response to treatment. Mobile PET/CT is another example of RMCC's commitment to provide our patients with the latest in technological advances, ensuring that our patients receive the highest quality cancer treatment available in their own community.

In addition to the new physicians, Drs. Scott Bearman and Peter McSweeney, with Rocky Mountain Blood and Marrow Program, we also welcomed Dr. Robert LaPorte as a radiation oncologist in Thornton and Dr. Douglas Reznick, hematologist/ oncologist, in Aurora. We will also be adding a new clinic location at Parker Adventist Hospital this summer, which will be our 19th location in the RMCC network.

In addition to our growth, 2004 promises to be a year marked by change and challenge. Currently, we are searching for an executive director. And as most of you know, the Medicare legislation, which was passed at the end of last year, will provide community based cancer centers throughout the country with significant challenges. We continue to work with US Oncology and other cancer organizations to address these issues as we encourage our lawmakers to amend the legislation. We will keep you up-to-date as developments unfold.

I look forward to all 2004 has to offer. Thank you for the part you play in delivering quality cancer care to our patients. You are all an important part of RMCC's team.

Sincerely,



Nicholas DiBella, M.D., RMCC President

A Day in the Life

Vicki Snider – RMCC Transplant Coordinator



For the past two years, Vicki Snider, RN, has worked as an autologous transplant coordinator at the Rocky Mountain Blood and Marrow Transplant Center. An autologous coordinator works with patients who are self-donors as opposed to patients who are receiving transplants from siblings or other unrelated donors.

Vicki cares for approximately 20 patients at a time who are in varying stages of the transplant process. For these patients, Vicki is their main point of contact, getting them ready and guiding them through the process which takes anywhere from 10 to 12 weeks.

Responsible for coordinating patients' transplants, Vicki starts working with patients before the transplant process has even begun. Navigating the patient through the pre-transplant phase, Vicki is responsible for the transplant work-up which includes ordering and scheduling all the patient's exams, labs, tests and any other required procedures.

It is during the pre-transplant phase that Vicki begins the education component which continues throughout the entire transplant process. This education process reinforces what the physician has gone over with the patient and their caregiver, apprising them of all tests, chemotherapies and side effects that can be expected.

Once cleared for the transplant, Vicki meets with the patient and the physician to go through all tests and necessary paperwork. She also works with the insurance company to get approval for the transplant, and helps out-of-town patients coordinate housing and care.

For Vicki it is working with the patients that makes it all worthwhile.

Elaine Wilson – PET Supervisor

As a full-time technologist and supervisor of PET technical services, which includes the Rocky Mountain PET Institute at Midtown as well as the new, mobile PET/CT, which travels between Colorado Springs, Denver - Midtown, Littleton and Aurora, Elaine Wilson's days are always full.

Her duties as a technologist involve performing PET scans on patients. Typically, the PET Institute scans nearly 14 patients per day. These scans can help a patient's physician determine if the patient's treatment is working in addition to detecting whether or not a disease remission has reoccurred.

It is caring for her patients that Elaine enjoys the most. "There are a few patients who I see on a regular basis as their disease goes through the cycle of remissions and reoccurrence," explained Elaine. "Getting to know these patients is uplifting. Cancer patients are resilient and caring for my patients helps me keep things in perspective."

In addition to her patient care responsibilities, Elaine works with many other departments throughout RMCC to coordinate operations for the PET Institute. She is also responsible for the scheduling and coordination of the mobile PET/CT and also has a host of other administrative duties.

Patient Profile: Marc Doucette

In the spring of 1998, Marc Doucette had graduated from medical school and was completing his intern year of residency at Presbyterian/St. Luke's Medical Center when his life took an unexpected turn.

Marc had been feeling weak and tired after exercise but it wasn't until he experienced a few severe nosebleeds that he went to the doctor and was diagnosed with aplastic anemia. This disease is essentially a failure of the bone marrow and in Marc's case its cause was unknown.

Marc received his treatment at the Rocky Mountain Blood and Marrow Transplant Center. Shortly after his diagnosis, Marc was admitted to PSL where Dr. Mark Brunvand treated Marc's

anemia with a bone marrow transplant.

Marc's bone marrow donor was his younger sister who was in her early 20s at the time. "I was lucky that my sister was a match," explained Marc. "The odds of siblings having matching bone marrow is about one in four."

During his transplant, Marc was in the hospital for about a month. Once he was released from the hospital, Marc spent nearly eight months as an outpatient, receiving red blood cell transfusions approximately every two weeks.

During his year long treatment, Marc took a break from his residency. He says that he thought briefly about changing his residency to hematology/oncology but decided to stick with his original plan of pursuing a career in emergency medicine.

Disease free for nearly six years, Marc lives with his wife and daughter in Taos, New Mexico, where he is working as an emergency room physician.

According to Marc, while his illness made him more understanding toward his patients, it also changed his perspective on things giving him a much greater appreciation for being alive.

Kudos

- The Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons gave the oncology program at the Medical Center of Aurora in conjunction with RMCC Aurora a three-year approval with no deficiencies and a perfect score of "1". Dr. Susan Freeman is the chair person of the Medical Center of Aurora Cancer Committee.
- Dr. Dev Paul gave a presentation on breast cancer treatment and the importance of clinical trials at a town meeting hosted by Y-me National Breast Cancer Organization on November 20, 2003.
- Dr. Ruth Oratz and Lisa Mullineaux gave a presentation entitled "Women at Risk: Genetic Susceptibility to Breast Cancer." The symposium was hosted by RMCC, Rose Women's Organization and Sharsheret on January 14, 2004.
- Drs. Robert Jotte and Robert LaPorte presented on the latest treatment options in the medical and radiation oncology at the 6th Annual Prostate Cancer Forum in Denver on February 28th.

Human Resources Update

Congratulations to the following RMCC employees who were recognized in December, 2003, for five, ten or fifteen years of service:

Five Years

Aurora:	Nancy Beegle and Carol Netwal
Boulder:	Karen Bowling, Ann Lamson and Patty Harper
CBO:	Steve Sevcik, Chasity Ross and Michelle Webb
Colorado Springs:	Pamela Hochmuth, Patricia Brewers, Dr. DeCarolis and Dr. Matei
Littleton:	Carol Cisler
Longmont:	Marilyn Germann
Midtown:	Beth Mechling, Poppy Beethe, Teresa Simoneau, Karen Glancy, Dr. Cohn,

Pueblo: Dr. Adler and Dr. Major
Brandy Cavender
Radiation: Barbara Heitzman, Lisa Bruehahn, Jill Riley, Susie Golden-Feierstein, Dr. Leonard, Dr. Aarestad, Dr. McNeely, Dr. Chin, Dr. Daniel and Dr. Howell
Rose: Diane Koch, Jacquelynn Luppess, Ann McLaughlin and Dr. Paul

Ten Years

Aurora: Dr. Faragher
Midtown: Kelly Mack, Karen Bailey-Barbour and Deborah Lemberger

Fifteen Years

Colorado Springs: Rita Fox
Radiation: Julie Bosacker

Updates

Community Events

- Look Good...Feel Better – In cooperation with the American Cancer Society, RMCC is hosting these events at all network locations in 2004.
- Skin Cancer Screenings – RMCC will host a series of skin cancer screenings at four facilities, Aurora, Littleton, Rose and Thornton. The screenings dates and location are:
 - May 1st in Aurora
 - May 15th at Rose and Thornton
 - May 22nd in Littleton

Individuals should contact the American Cancer Society at (720) 524-5439 to pre-register for the screenings.

- Day of Caring – RMCC is a sponsor of the Denver event on Saturday, May 8. We will host 10 participants and have a display table at the event. RMCC physicians and nurses will be speaking at the event.
- Colorado Cancer Conference – RMCC is a sponsor of this statewide conference to be held on August 9th and 10th in Denver. The conference will focus on quality of life and palliative care, prevention and intervention strategies, science and information, insurability, clinical skill building, health disparities and tobacco control. The intended audience is physicians, community outreach specialists, public health educators, nurses, social workers and other individuals and organizations with an interest in cancer prevention and control. For more information, visit <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/ccpc/cancerconference.html>.

Managed Care

A few changes in the payor arena include:

- California-based Wellpoint is being merged into Anthem, Inc., the parent company of Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Colorado. The new company will be called Wellpoint and will be the largest insurer in the nation with 24 million covered lives.
- Through the third quarter of 2003, HMO revenues in Colorado were down 5.6% while profits were up significantly. There has been a 14% decline in HMO members in Colorado over the last year.
- Anthem continues to be the largest health plan in the state as it inches up to 700,000 members. UnitedHealthcare also continues to grow.
- Colorado-based health insurer Great West Healthcare has filed a lawsuit over the state's

authority to levy assessments on Colorado insurers to subsidize Colorado's insurance carrier for uninsurable Colorado residents. CoverColorado provides an insurance mechanism for Colorado residents who have been denied coverage by health insurers for pre-existing conditions. Colorado insurers are assessed for their share of the program's costs based on membership. This is likely to be the start of a long battle to find funding for CoverColorado.

- The new Centura Parker Adventist Hospital opened on February 3rd.
- The U.S. Department of Defense has eased provider access restrictions for TriCare Standard members. These beneficiaries now have access to in-patient care at civilian hospitals without prior approval. This rule does not affect TriCare Prime Members.

New/renegotiated contracts:

- Group contract with UnitedHealthcare effective January 1, 2004.
- Contract for bone marrow/stem cell transplants with United Resource Network (URN) effective February 9, 2004.

Legislative Update

In mid-November, the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed by President Bush, resulting in the most significant overhaul of the Medicare program since its establishment in 1965. There are 12 sections to the bill, and it will have a far-reaching impact on health care financing over the next decade.

First and foremost, the MMA creates a prescription drug benefit for Medicare beneficiaries. The first step of this program is a prescription drug discount card that will be available in June 2004. The standard prescription drug benefit will go into effect in 2006. The MMA also revises the current Medicare+Choice program and renames it as the Medicare Advantage program. Health plans will be receiving larger payments for their Medicare HMO members. Plans have been asked to pass on these increases as savings for beneficiaries through reduced premiums/co-pays or increased benefits. Each individual plan will announce their detailed changes in March 2004.

On the physician side, the MMA cancelled a scheduled cut of 4.5% in reimbursement for physician professional fees. Instead, physicians will receive an average 1.5% increase for professional fees in 2004. Unfortunately, the MMA also included reimbursement cuts for drugs infused in physician offices. In response to these cuts, US Oncology has joined the National Patient Advocate Foundation and other community organizations in launching AccessWatch (www.accesswatch.org), a new Web-based information clearinghouse designed to help track and inform lawmakers about how changes to Medicare reimbursements implemented by the MMA are affecting patient access to community cancer care. AccessWatch is designed to track and analyze information on such consequences as treatment site closures, referral of patients from the community setting to hospitals, reduction in clinical trial accruals, reduction of charity care, decreased patient access to care due to inability to meet co-insurance obligations, reduction of nursing and other staff, reduction of care and transportation services in rural communities, and the discontinuation of social work, nutritional counseling and related essential support services. You, your colleagues, patients and families are encouraged to use the web site.

Clinical Leadership Council

The RMCC Clinical Leadership Council (CLC) is off to great start in 2004. The group is made of clinical staff from different disciplines and offices and typically meets every other month. In

February a Medical Oncology Nursing Orientation Manual was distributed to the group. The manual was pulled together by Theresa Bryant (Midtown), Cathy Jost (Colorado Springs), and Sandy Stubbendick (Aurora). Thanks for your help!

Michael Forsyth presented a summary of Medication Variances from 2003. The group discussed the importance of reporting all errors, even if the error didn't reach the patient. This gives us the opportunity to find out what needs to be changed to prevent real injury to our patients. Michael also discussed a new drug to treat mesothelioma, Alimta.

Reimbursement changes are impacting the clinical staff too. These were discussed by Nancy Beegle.

The group is planning on addressing several new projects in 2004, including;

- Orientation manual for medical assistants
- Patient/family chemotherapy teaching booklet update
- Improving the medication ordering process
- Regime insight education
- Computer education
- Sharing triage standards/protocols
- Development of a guide for setting up internship programs

Thanks to everyone who helps this committee be productive and successful!

RMCC Foundation Update

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, June 27, 2004 for the 5th Annual Spirit Sprint

The 5th Annual Spirit Sprint is June 27, 2004 in Denver's City Park at 8 am. With record setting numbers last year, the event raised more than \$60,000 for the Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers Foundation. Almost 400 individuals registered for the 4th Annual Spirit Sprint and over 330 participated the day of the event. This year we are planning on even better numbers. The committee has hired a new race management company and is very excited for this year's race.



All the money raised by the Spirit Sprint goes directly to the RMCC Foundation. The RMCC Foundation provides funds to current cancer patients in financial need. In 2003, more than \$95,000 was distributed to over 230 cancer patients to cover expenses such as housing, food, utilities, medical supplies and insurance.

Currently the Spirit Sprint committee is working on corporate sponsorships if you know of any contacts for potential corporate sponsors please contact Erin Hought at erin.hought@usoncology.com. Or If you are interested in participating on one of the planning committees please contact Dana McCroskey at (303) 418-7600 or email her at dana.mccroskey@usoncology.com

4th Annual Spirit Sprint t-shirts are for sale for \$5.00 (in Adult L and Adult XL), please contact Erin Hought at erin.hought@usoncology.com to purchase t-shirts.

RMCC employees can now donate directly to the RMCC Foundation through a payroll deduction program. This program can start and stop at the employee's request, it can also be a one-time donation or an ongoing donation. Please contact Nancy Hopkins, RMCC payroll manager, at nancy.hopkins@usoncology.com for more information.

News from the Field

AURORA

Congratulations to the following employees of the month:

October 2003 – Rich Power

November 2003 – Nora Gonzales

December 2003 – Kym Birks

January 2004 – Felicia Jones

We welcome Dr. Douglas M. Reznick, Keisha Shears-Phorson, switchboard operator and Robin Near, medical records technician.

This holiday season was full of activity at the Aurora clinic. Physicians and staff adopted 13 children for Christmas and purchased 50 gifts for them. The patient holiday party was held on December 19 and was an overwhelming success. Congratulations to the radiation department. Patients voted their holiday door in an elves theme, the winner of the door-decorating contest.

BOULDER

Congratulations to Dr. Fox on passing her medical oncology/hematology boards.

We welcome RNs, Natalie Schaan and Chad Adams. Natalie previously worked in the oncology/hematology unit at Boulder Community Hospital. Chad recently moved from Georgia where he worked for Northwest Georgia Oncology Centers. We also welcome Lisa Hullinger to our research department.

COLORADO SPRINGS

Congratulations to the following:

- Dr. Burke on passing his medical oncology/hematology boards.
- Carrie Reeck, scheduler, on the birth of her son, Dylan Heath Reeck, who was born on January 12, 2004.
- Michelle Lupo, scheduler, on her upcoming nuptials this summer.

We welcome Christine Leister, RN, to our chemo infusion area. We also welcome Rodney Denius who joined our office as a temporary worker in the scheduling department.

This year we are holding seminars that focus on strategies for living well with cancer. The first, "Understanding and Managing Treatment Related Fatigue," was held on February 18th. On March 4th, we sponsored a seminar entitled "Improving the Chemotherapy Experience." On March 25, we will host a seminar entitled, "Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Myths, Facts and Benefits."

We also facilitate several support groups.

- The Men with Cancer Discussion Group, which focuses on the issues men with cancer face, was held on Tuesdays in February and will continue on March 2, 9 and 16th.
- The Post-Treatment Support Group, dealing with the importance of moving beyond cancer and into a new life, will be held on Wednesdays, April 14, 21 and 28 and on May 5, 12, 19.
- Couples Coping with Recurrent/Metastatic Cancer will be held on Tuesdays. The specific dates are to be determined.

DENVER – Midtown/ Rose

We welcome Kathy Albert, Nurse Practitioner, full-time at Midtown and Rose.

RMCC In the News

- On December 26, the Intermountain Jewish-News ran a story entitled, “Women at Risk: Genetic susceptibility to breast cancer.” This article highlighted a seminar on genetics and breast cancer featuring Dr. Ruth Oratz and Lisa Mullinueaux, genetic counselor.
- On January 13, the Commerce City Express ran a calendar announcement on the breast cancer seminar.
- On January 14, the Boulder Daily Camera ran a brief about the breast cancer seminar.
- On Feb. 3, the NBC affiliate in Colorado Springs ran a story about PET/CT.
- On Feb. 9, the Denver Post ran a story entitled, “Coverage Catch-22 traps deathly ill man.” This story quoted Social Worker Janey Alpert and Dr. Scott Bearman.

Questions or Comments

How do you like the newsletter? Your feedback is important. We are always looking for story ideas, as well as suggestions, on how to make the newsletter better. If you have any ideas, suggestions, comments or questions, please contact Tiffanie Burnett at Tiffanie.Burnett@USOncology.com or Erin Hought at Erin.Hought@USOncology.com