

BUILDING A CYBERKNIFE® PROSTATE SBRT PROGRAM

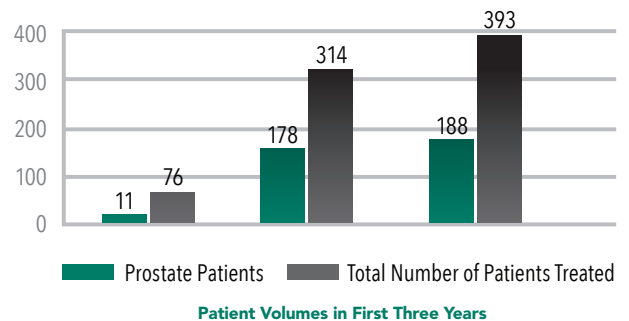


**HOW ONE HOSPITAL BUILT A
SUCCESSFUL SBRT PROGRAM
WHILE COMPETING WITH IMRT
TREATMENT CENTERS**

CyberKnife® Robotic Radiosurgery System

In 2005, Winthrop University Hospital, New York, was looking to update their Radiation Oncology department. They had a traditional linear accelerator and were looking to add a system with stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) capabilities to meet the needs of their Neurosurgeons. So in October 2005, they opened their brand new CyberKnife® Center. After their initial success with intracranial procedures on the CyberKnife Robotic Radiosurgery System, they were eager to start treating extracranial cases. Their clinical team was particularly excited about using the CyberKnife System for prostate cancer patients and expanding their Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT) program.

However, fairly soon a significant challenge presented itself in their territory. A physician-owned Radiation Therapy center opened in July 2006. Soon after, 90% of the referring urologists in Winthrop's territory joined this group and started referring prostate patients to their own Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) system. Out of thirty five urologists in Winthrop's territory, only three to four continued to refer patients to Winthrop's Radiation center. As a result, Winthrop's prostate volumes dropped dramatically.



Winthrop needed to ensure that their CyberKnife System continued to receive a fair share of prostate cases. Their team knew that the CyberKnife System was a viable clinical alternative to surgery or IMRT for their patients, so they decided to get the word out directly. Initially they educated their staff and in-house physicians, and next they reached out to and strengthened relationships with the community physicians. Since reaching out directly to patients was critical, Winthrop launched aggressive Direct-To-Patient campaigns to build awareness in the community.

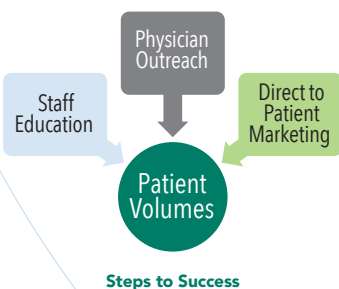
As a result of these initiatives, Winthrop built a successful prostate SBRT program and was able to recover equipment and building costs in about a year. And during the next few years, they regained their prostate patient volumes and also became one of the world's top sites for Prostate SBRT. By December 2011, they successfully treated nearly 2,000 patients on the CyberKnife System and almost 900 of those being prostate cancer patients.

Garry J. Schwall, COO of Winthrop stated, "We soon realized not only the immediate clinical benefit but the potential extension of CyberKnife technology to other patient subsets and pathological conditions. But introducing CyberKnife technology was a complex and difficult administrative endeavor since we were the first in New York State to bring this technology to market." Garry remembers creating an awareness plan to address multiple groups starting with Winthrop's staff and physicians.

STAFF AWARENESS & EDUCATION

Many of Winthrop's in-house staff physicians, including Neurosurgeons, Radiation Oncologists and Urologists, were given a one-on-one comprehensive introduction to the use of the CyberKnife System and were educated on the clinical indications and benefits of CyberKnife treatment. Garry stated "This educational endeavor was paramount to the successful use of the technology since many physicians were somewhat skeptical of this new technology because of their long-standing experience with other modes of treatment."

[Winthrop] was able to recover equipment and building costs in about a year.



“The biggest reason for our success is the culture of collaboration and cooperation that we have fostered at Winthrop. Every patient here is seen by a Surgeon, a Radiation Oncologist and our Physics staff. This cohesiveness as a team and our administrative support has been the cornerstone of our success.”

Dr. Jonathan Haas,
Chief, Division of Radiation Oncology,
Winthrop University Hospital, New York

Multiple educational seminars, posters and demonstrations were developed throughout the hospital to spread awareness about the CyberKnife® System. From nurses to therapists, almost all employees received a basic understanding of the new technology. The entire staff soon became ambassadors for the CyberKnife Center in their community.

COMMUNITY PHYSICIAN OUTREACH

Physician outreach was a complex challenge because Winthrop did not wish to undermine the role of Urologists in treating prostate cancer. Instead, the goal was to position the CyberKnife System as a desirable alternative, when appropriate, to other forms of treatment. Winthrop also reached out to physicians beyond those in the traditional referring network: primary care physicians, internists and nurses – practically anyone who came in contact with prostate cancer patients. Dr. Jonathan Haas stated, “We frequently met with community physicians to engage in one-to-one discussions about CyberKnife applications. Even today, I reach out to them regularly.” Winthrop also conducts Continuing Medical Education activities with focus on CyberKnife SBRT. Dr. Haas thinks that developing strong relationships with the community physicians has been critical to building a robust CyberKnife SBRT program.



DIRECT-TO-PATIENT MARKETING

Early on, the team at Winthrop realized that reaching out directly to their patient population would be instrumental in building sustainable patient volumes. One of the very first initiatives was releasing print ads in local newspapers and magazines specifically addressing many men’s concerns regarding incontinence and impotence, potential side effects of prostate surgery. This gained significant attention and resulted in many patient inquiries. Garry stated “From newspaper advertisements and digital billboards to TV and radio ads, we presented information about the new technology to the community through multiple media outlets.” Winthrop built a strong digital presence and positioned the CyberKnife System as a revolutionary, state-of-the-art technology. They kept pace with social media explosion and exploited those avenues extremely well.

Winthrop also organized multiple educational symposia for the general public. At these sessions, the public was informed about the clinical benefits of the new system and was given the opportunity to connect with the clinical team. The Radiation Oncologists became popular names in the community and patients started self-referring directly to them. In addition, community newsletters containing CyberKnife clinical case studies were regularly mailed to all the households in their neighborhoods. As a result of these activities, the awareness surged, and through word-of-mouth recommendations, many patients started asking their doctors if they were suitable candidates for CyberKnife treatment. Within the first three years, Winthrop not only built a successful CyberKnife SBRT Program, but also saw their prostate patient volumes increase back to 2005 levels.

“CyberKnife® is the biggest advance in prostate cancer treatment in over a decade.”

- If you're a candidate for surgery, you're a candidate for CyberKnife.
- Our success rate is equal to any other form of treatment, including surgery.
- There's no cutting, no bleeding, no recovery period, no pain during or after treatment.
- No incontinence and much less chance of impotence than other treatments.
- Treatment takes only 5 days, for 25 minutes each day. Not 5 days a week for 6 weeks, as in standard radiation.
- CyberKnife is NOT experimental – it's FDA approved. It's covered by insurance. It's covered by Medicare.
- Winthrop is one of the most experienced CyberKnife centers in the U.S.

For a consultation, or to speak with Dr. Haas, call 866.46N7HROE or visit winthrop.org

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