

1st Line Oncology First in North America to Begin Cancer Treatments Using Elekta VMAT and Monaco Planning Software

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Patient with prostate cancer helps pioneer improved arc-based radiation therapy delivery technique; Coconut Creek, Fla. center is world's first freestanding cancer center to use treatment solution

COCONUT CREEK, Fla., and ATLANTA, April 15 /PRNewswire/ -- While a prostate cancer diagnosis is never good news, a 53-year-old male patient at 1st Line Oncology learned quickly his cancer was detected early and that he would be among the world's first to benefit from an advanced arc-based treatment, recently enhanced with sophisticated new planning software. For his treatment, 1st Line Oncology is using Elekta VMAT planned with Monaco® software, which is optimized for this rapid radiotherapy delivery method.



"Before treatment, Dr. Kaplan at 1st Line said this technique reduces the treatment time by two-thirds*," says the patient, a managing professional in Florida. "The first session seemed very fast*. There's a 50-inch screen on the ceiling that plays music. I listened to a couple of songs and the treatment was over."

The first of the patient's 25 Elekta VMAT sessions, or fractions, occurred March 17. He was on and off the patient couch in just under 14 minutes, six minutes faster than a non-arc method. For patients with prostate cancer, short treatments are critical to patient comfort; a full bladder is needed to push the colon upward and away from the radiation field to minimize its exposure.

"Elekta VMAT is fast*, and it's even better with Monaco planning," says Edward J. Kaplan, M.D., radiation oncologist and medical director at 1st Line Oncology.

Refined planning tools to facilitate high quality treatments

Monaco provides key features that allow clinicians to create plans in which the greatest possible therapeutic radiation hits the cancer target while minimizing the dose to healthy normal tissue.

"Monaco allows the clinician to plan around structures effectively," says 1st Line medical dosimetrist Dawn Herring. "With standard planning, we often weren't completely sure if we might have reduced the dose to the bladder and rectum or increased the dose to the prostate. Monaco helps indicate where we can improve the plan."

"In addition," she adds, "the Monte Carlo dose algorithm helps us predict the precise dose the patient will receive, so we can deliver the highest safe dose."

Treatment as a "comfortable experience"

By March 22, the patient completed his fourth fraction and is struck by how easy, fast and convenient the experience has been.

"It's very agreeable. There is no inconvenience and 1st Line Oncology makes sure the facility is open at 7:30 in the morning," he says. "The machine is warmed up and I'm the first person on it. Dr. Kaplan and his staff are very professional and the atmosphere is pleasant -- like a high-end hotel. What could have been a frightening challenge in someone's life -- cancer treatment -- is really more like a comfortable experience."

"Too much talent has been lost to the world for want of a little courage," he continues. "Many people with a serious disease might put off treatment because they fear the treatment itself. If they knew how easy and quick treatments are, they may find the courage to seek therapy before it becomes more serious. I encourage people to use today's technology to take care of themselves."

According to Dr. Kaplan, his prognosis is excellent.

*Actual treatment times may vary

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