Improved Y-90 Patient Experience in a Multispecialty Oncology Practice

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Introduction

CARTI Cancer Center is an oncology team consisting of medical oncology, radiation oncology and surgical oncology working side-by-side with diagnostic and interventional radiology. These specialties work closely together to provide patients with a full range of treatment options within a single network of coordinated care. In the fight against cancer, CARTI Cancer Center services include some of the most advanced treatments available today.

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Introduction of SIRT Y-90 at CARTI

When CARTI launched, it offered the most advanced interventional radiology services in the state. Their center can perform paracentesis, thoracentesis and miscellaneous CT and ultrasound-guided biopsies, and placement of central venous lines, peripheral intravenous lines, and Kopans needle localizations. This was a crucial component of the radiology service line offering because the medical oncologists did not want their patients waiting hours or days at the hospital to receive a port or other services that would delay chemotherapy. CARTI added a state-of-the-art fixed unit with cone-beam and CT capabilities all within the angio suite.

Traditionally, Selective Internal Radiation Therapy (SIRT) using SIR-Spheres® Y-90 resin microspheres has been performed as an outpatient hospital procedure by the interventional radiologist (IR) who delivers the radioactive microspheres under fluoroscopic guidance to the patient via the hepatic artery that feeds the tumors in the liver. The microspheres are carried through the arterioles to lodge in the capillary bed of the tumors, emitting localized radiation with a mean penetration of 2.5 mm in tissue.

CARTI recognized an opportunity to provide SIRT through their IR service line. The 13 medical oncologists at CARTI immediately saw the benefit of a streamlined and effective treatment offering at their center.

Making the move to a multispecialty oncology practice

Rapid developments in cancer diagnosis and treatment have led many medical oncology groups to consider adding interventional radiologists and other specialists to their practices, expanding patient access to care and coordinated treatment options.

For example, chemotherapy and SIRT are often carried out concurrently. The availability of both modalities in one location or through one group can improve communication between the two specialist disciplines. This paradigm has shown to enhance patient convenience and better facilitate expedited treatment planning.

Defining multispecialty goals

Successfully adding other specialists is a process that takes time, one that starts with clearly defining the overall goals. For many practices, the primary goal is improving patient care. Initially, medical oncologists at CARTI sent their patients to an insurance preferred diagnostic imaging facility but the experience was less than ideal. The team wanted to

improve patient access to care and care coordination which led to the shift to a multispecialty practice.

"*The reports patients received often lacked information they would have found meaningful in planning therapy. Having radiology in the group and our own equipment improves the quality because the same radiologists, who know what we need, are carrying out the imaging with the same equipment for every patient*," says Dr. Edgar St. Amour, an interventional radiologist at CARTI.

In other cases, physicians see it as an opportunity to expand into a particular market or strengthen relationships with health plans and ancillary service providers. Whatever the goals, it's important that they are well identified and agreed upon by the current practice team. Only then can you move forward with identifying suitable candidates and managing group needs.

Success in the CARTI office-based Y-90 program

CARTI Cancer Center has performed more than 100 Y-90 procedures since the launch in late 2017. "*Our IO experience so far has been pretty well received by our referring doctors*," says Dr. David Hays, an interventional radiologist at CARTI.

Dr. Edgar St. Amour adds, "*As with any new service line, it takes education and results before your referring doctors can truly see the benefit. In our facility, we all share in the treatment, and risk, to patients who are treated with Y-90.*"

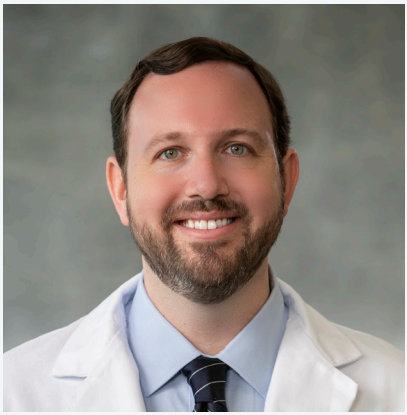
The multispecialty program has also improved the experience for patients. "*Our patients love not having to go to the hospital and spend a day at the facility for this simple and quick procedure*," St. Amour notes.

Hays and St. Amour both add, "*Our patient experience has been far better than when we treated in the hospital. We are treating these patients faster than when they were in the hospital and getting them back to medical oncology sooner. We have significantly reduced the time to treat and are tracking outcomes with the expectation that they are better due to the reduction in time between treatments.*"

"*We can walk down our hall, talk with our medical oncology colleagues about the recent liver scan we read, recommend SIR-Spheres® Y-90 resin microspheres, and the next week the patient is booked for a mapping and treatment*," says Hays. "*We have streamlined and simplified the Y-90 procedure to be comparable to the simplicity of chemotherapy, which makes it very advantageous for our medical oncology colleagues to refer more.*"

About the Authors

David Hays, M.D., has been in practice for 26 years and joined CARTI in 2015, where he practices Interventional Radiology and serves as the Director of Interventional and Diagnostic Radiology. Dr. Hays specializes in Interventional Oncology, which is performed at his office-based angio suite in Little Rock, Arkansas. Dr. Hays is board certified by the American Board of Radiology; Diagnostic Radiology and Interventional Radiology. He graduated from medical school at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in 1987 and the College of Health Related Professions in Little Rock, Arkansas. He completed his residency at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences from 1993-1997, where he was Chief Resident from 1995-1997.



Edgar D. St. Amour, M.D., is a board certified Radiologist with a special interest in Interventional Oncology and Diagnostic Radiology. He graduated from medical school at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in 2012, where he earned degrees in College of Medicine, Research and Anesthesia. He completed his residency at NYP — Columbia University, Diagnostic Radiology from 2013-2017. He completed his fellowship training at the Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute from 2017-2018 in Vascular and Interventional Radiology.

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