

IMPACT

Influencing Models of Practice with Advanced Competency in Therapeutic Radiation

Vol 1

START OF SOMETHING NEW...

We are excited to introduce to you our inaugural bi-annual newsletter!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ESTABLISHING A
PLACE FOR US- CSRT
COMMUNITY OF
PRACTICE 2

A CALL TO ARMS 2

FOLLOW US:



@AdvPracticeRT



In 2004, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) funded a two-year development project to assess the feasibility of implementing a new model of care that would be facilitated by the development of a new health care provider role – the Advanced Practice Radiation Therapist. The success of that two-year project served as a springboard for a subsequent 10-year series of projects (2007-2016) that guided the evolution of the Clinical Specialist Radiation Therapist (CSRT) role. There are currently 22 CSRTs practicing in an advanced capacity in radiation therapy in Ontario at this time.

Throughout the editions of this newsletter, we will introduce you to our team of CSRTs, bring you news about our latest research, and look at a variety of issues pertinent to the advanced practice radiation therapy world. Each edition will highlight one member of our CSRT team. Hopefully by seeing where and how certain roles are being integrated into different departments, it may provide the impetus to start such a position in your area.

This edition includes words from our guest contributor and the CSRT project director, Ms. Nicole Harnett. Her article addresses the benefits of the CSRT role and challenges us to ensure the role is sustained. Our next article introduces you to our new Community of Practice (CoP) for CSRTs at Cancer Care Ontario (CCO). The co-leads for this, Ms. Laura D'Alimonte (current) and Michelle Lau (previous), speak about the goals and objectives of the group, and how you can follow us on social media should you want to stay involved. Finally, in the piece below, we showcase our CSRT from the Juravinski Cancer Centre, Ms. Julie Blain.

We hope you enjoy our first edition. Please share with your colleagues. If you have questions, or know of someone who may wish to be included on our readership list, contact us at lori.holden@sunnybrook.ca and darby.erler@sunnybrook.ca. Thank you!

Lori Holden and Darby Erler

CSRTs at the Sunnybrook Odette Cancer Centre

CSRT SPOTLIGHT



PALLIATIVE CSRT

Juravinski Cancer Centre (JCC) and Walker Family Cancer Centre (WFCC)

Julie Blain has had an extensive and very productive career in radiation therapy. After receiving a BSc from McMaster University, Julie graduated from the Princess Margaret Hospital - Hamilton Regional Cancer Centre (HRCC) School of Radiation Therapy in 1991 and spent 15 years working at the HRCC and BC Cancer Agency - Victoria, Vancouver Island.

She is one of the pioneers of advanced practice, starting her role as a CSRT in 2008 in the demonstration phase of the project. She currently works as CSRT Bone Metastases at JCC and WFCC, where she is the Bone Metastases Coordinator for the Rapid Access Metastases Program as well as the Telemedicine Coordinator for the Radiation Therapy Department. Julie's specialized knowledge makes her indispensable to the multidisciplinary team. One of her greatest achievements is her work with the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) where videoconferencing has transformed Radiation Oncology consultation.

Julie's work as a leader and patient advocate for telemedicine won her the inaugural provincial Champion of Telemedicine Award last year. Julie recently completed her MSc. from Sheffield Hallam University and in recognition of her leadership skills was a key participant in the Hamilton Health Sciences Green Belt Lean Event. As her CSRT work continues, she pushes the envelope to redefine practice models in radiation therapy.

ESTABLISHING A PLACE FOR US

Developing a community of practice [CoP]

In the span of eight years, the number of CSRT roles has grown exponentially across the province, from its humble beginning of just five located exclusively in Toronto, to 22 roles dispersed around the province! We are here and continue to be a novel and impactful model of care and an essential component of the Ontario cancer care system. However, with all great projects, an end is inevitable; the CSRT Sustainability Project officially came to an end in June, 2016. It was with this expectation that the CSRT Community of Practice (CoP) was born.

The development of the CSRT CoP is an excellent way for us to interact virtually through monthly teleconferences and in person during annual meetings. It allows us the opportunity to continue knowledge sharing, promote best practice initiatives and discuss solutions to common problems.

A CALL TO ARMS

by Nicole Harnett

Contemporary radiation therapy is at a turning point. Several paradigm shifts in combination with the projected increase in cancer incidence and prevalence, will pose incredible challenges for this jurisdiction:

- **Technological innovation** – it is expected that the pace of innovation in radiation medicine will only continue to escalate requiring a highly responsive, discipline-specific team of experts to keep pace with the new information being presented and the knowledge translation required to keep abreast of the changes.
- **Personalized medicine** – the convergence of high precision radiation therapy taking into consideration both the individual tumour microenvironment and molecular characteristics of the specific patient.

In the evolving radiation medicine world, it will no longer be sufficient to do “more of the same” to manage the many challenges being faced. It will be necessary to consider creative and non-traditional solutions and to look differently at how we work. The CSRT Projects, which are wrapping up a 12-year run in Ontario, provide one possible strategy for rethinking the radiation treatment team and how we work together.

There is powerful evidence that CSRTs contribute positively to patient care and represent important value for money. The combination of various data sets demonstrates the overall improvement of care provided to our patients. Patients and other stakeholders all attest to this impact, and documenta-

tion of the many service and system improvements identified and initiated by the CSRTs provide further evidence of this positive impact.

A strong case can also be made for the impact that CSRTs have on capacity for radiation treatment. When CSRTs are appropriately deployed, new patient clinics have greater capacity for new patients. In other cases, where CSRTs assume activities of the

Radiation Oncologist (RO), the RO is free to conduct other, more complex and medically related work. CSRTs have also worked to improve access to existing services for patients who are in the system and to extend the reach of the current system to patient groups who have previously underutilized radiation treatment services in Ontario.

It is also clear that CSRTs are having a positive impact on the entire radiation medicine specialty. With new skills and new relationships, radiation therapy voices are being heard more clearly than ever. Not only are CSRTs contributing to the emerging body of knowledge for MRT(T)s, they are also help-

by Laura D'Alimonte [current co-lead]
Michelle Lau [previous co-lead]

Three objectives were initially identified for our CoP:

1. **Knowledge Translation and Exchange (KTE)**
The CoP provides a forum for CSRTs to share best practices that will help standardize and improve existing advanced practice, ultimately eliciting safe and high quality radiation treatment in Ontario.
2. **Palliative Working Group**
The CoP has established a working group consisting of Palliative CSRTs from across the province in order to effectively share best practices and develop a recommendation report around the Palliative CSRT role within Ontario.
3. **Advanced Practice Tools**
The CoP has established a working group that aims to develop tools to assist with new CSRT implementation. The Working Group has prioritized the development of business case tools and templates as the primary resource to assist with new role implementation.

In the short time that we've been established, the group has several exciting initiatives underway. We have an active social media presence on Twitter ([@AdvPracticeRT](https://twitter.com/AdvPracticeRT)) with close to 200 followers, so connect with us and keep up-to-date with what is happening with the CSRTs in Ontario!



ing to advance radiation medicine as a whole and often find themselves at the cutting edge of new radiation treatment frontiers.

The data collected and presented throughout the project have produced a maturing body of knowledge that compels decision makers to consider this model of care amongst their tool kit for maintaining Ontario's ability to provide timely, high quality, safe radiation treatment in a cost-effective way. For more information about the project, its results and how to decide if advanced practice in radiation therapy is for you or your department, visit the website – www.ontarioradiationtherapy.ca – or use the contact information included in this newsletter.