

HEALTH

Proton Therapy: A Success Story Made Known on the Today Show

NewsUSA

(NU) - Proton therapy, a radiation therapy that is growing in popularity among cancer patients, promises astounding results. Thanks to NBC correspondent George Lewis' "prostate diary" report on The Today Show, Americans now know more about the advantages of proton therapy.

"I went on a radiation vacation," stated NBC's Lewis. "If you're a guy worried about your male components, limiting collateral damage is an important consideration and a major selling point for the advocates of proton therapy."

Dr. Jerry Slater, head of radiation medicine at Loma Linda University in Southern California, is fond of putting it this way: "Unlike conventional radiation, proton radiation has a well-defined high dose area which can be manipulated to precisely surround an irregularly shaped target." The result? Protons destroy cancerous cells without damaging healthy cells.

Prostate cancer patients like Lewis, who did his homework, decided proton treatment at Loma Linda was his best option to avoid the side effects he was concerned about.

Another good example is children with cancer, who frequently experience devastating side effects from conventional radiation, such as growth inhibition, can develop normally after receiving proton therapy treatment. Its no wonder the nation's five proton centers cannot keep up with patient demand. As Lewis reported, some patients with limited health care coverage, or patients from abroad, have been willing to personally supplement reimbursement to gain the advantages of proton therapy.

Medicare and most private



Proton therapy promises a higher quality of life and fewer side effects for cancer patients.

health insurers cover the costs of proton therapy procedures. A vast majority of cancer patients agree on one thing – technologies that promote faster healing with fewer side effects prove priceless.

From a physician's perspective, the aim is to "do no harm" – however, radiation therapists know that traditional radiation can destroy healthy cells and tissue. In most cases, radiation oncologists cannot deliver enough radiation to destroy tumors without compromising patient health.

In contrast, proton therapy can help patients not only survive cancer, but offer hope for a cure in addition to returning to a normal life afterwards. Lewis said he sailed through nine weeks of proton therapy. "Today, I feel great and my 40 inch waistline is shrinking as I work on eating less and exercising more."

For more information, call 800-protons (776-8667) or visit www.proton-therapy.org or www.protons.com.