

## DEPARTMENT TEAM WINS IMPROVING OUR WORKPLACE AWARD (IOWA)



In May 2005, the Department of Radiation Oncology moved into their new clinic space. The size of the physical clinic space more than tripled. This move required a new workflow that consisted of new integration of a completely digital, paperless solution.

The team from the department of Radiation Oncology that won the award consists of a group of individuals from all areas of the department; clinical, physicist, dosimetrist, radiation therapist, nursing, billing/scheduling and administration.

The team was recognized with the IOWA Award for working together to create a physical and electronic workflow for staff and patients. Parallel to the workflow, a fully electronic patient record was created. Paper patient charts are no longer created. Full departmental training was then needed to ensure a consistent application and efficient workings of the clinic. Algorithm for applying workflow was generated and reviewed by all.

As well as implementing these workflow changes a full change in equipment vendors was installed. This required full departmental training on this

equipment and its integration with the electronic flow and patient record. A new workflow, electronic record and training was required that would fit a new larger facility with no immediate increase in staff numbers.

The nominated team created an electronic flow of information that mirrors all requirements for physical workflow for our patients and staff. This dovetails into the departmental electronic patient medical record. A fully electronic patient record including treatment planning images is unique to the University as well as Radiation Oncology departments. No other Radiation Oncology department in the nation is known to have a fully electronic system. Academic training on new equipment and new software was done to assist in facilitating this process. Full staff training was required to ensure patient record compliance as well as being sure that we created a system that would work well to enhance the patient visit. This training included a retreat, classroom computer work, and actual mock clinics. In sum, the team developed a new physical and electronic workflow to treat cancer patients on new equipment with new software all while seizing the opportunity to put this workflow into action with a fully electronic patient medical record.

The results have been extremely positive. The electronic record has eliminated our need to extend a patient visit if we are

unable to locate a physical chart. This also insures a complete and current medical record. This has increased efficiency for radiation therapists, nurses and physicians as well as decreased our staff time in maintaining these charts. It is available to others throughout the health system. The tracking of data and ability to pull data for research or quality assurance was near non-existent until we implemented the electronic patient record.

The protocol followed to prepare for treating patients as well as the patient experience while in our clinic was fully evaluated and often drastically changed. This was part of the process improvement that was one of the driving forces behind this project. The time and dedication the nominated team put into creating a physical and electronic workflow for a new environment with new equipment is unparalleled.

Team Members: Sharon Baumler, Nurse Supervisor; John Bayouth, Director, Medical Physics; John Buatti, Department Chair; Darlene Chesnut, Chief Therapist; John Dill, Systems Administrator and Programmer; Jana Grienke, Billing/Scheduling; Terese Howes, Chief Resident; Geraldine Jacobson, Clinical Associate Professor; Jennifer Kos, Radiation Therapist; Darrin Pelland, Dosimetrist; and Laurie Smith, Department Administrator.