Queensland-first for Sunshine Coast cancer patients

In a Queensland first, cancer patients in the Sunshine Coast region now have access to state-of-the-art medical imaging equipment for radiation treatment planning.

Health Minister Steven Miles said the Government was investing over $650,000 in specialised imaging equipment known as a ‘MRI Simulator’.

“The Palaszczuk Government is committed to delivering the very best care to Queenslanders right across the state.

“This new equipment will mean cancer patients will no longer have to sit in the MRI for up to 40 minutes. In fact, they can get that down to just ten minutes.

“That’s better for the comfort of the patient but also frees up the MRI to see even more people.”

The funding has allowed an existing MRI scanner at Sunshine Coast University Hospital to be upgraded so it can accurately simulate the radiotherapy treatment environment. This includes new MRI-safe positioning equipment and a hand-held 3D surface scanner.

Radiation oncologist Dr Myo Min said, “this means patients will be positioned exactly the same for their MRI scans and their radiation treatment.

“The improved accuracy and information with an MRI Simulator allows our treatments to be tailored even more closely to the individual patients’ needs.”

Dr Min said the equipment also reduced the length of time patients had to spend in the MRI scanner itself. This is good news for cancer patients and frees up access to the MRI for other patients.

“By upgrading an existing MRI scanner we have also been able to save money while providing the latest in technology. Purchasing a new scanner for the same purpose could have cost up to $3 million.

“This is an exciting step towards the future of radiotherapy treatment and we’re proud to be able to implement it in a sustainable and efficient way.”

The project was coordinated by David Willis, the Director of Radiation Therapy, Mark Denham, the Clinical Services Manager for MRI, Colin Baker, Director of Medical Imaging Services, and Dr Craig Maskiell, Director of Radiology.
“This is a great example of how different parts of the hospital system can work together to provide better care for patients. We’ve been able to draw on a wide range of expertise,” Mr Willis said.

Under Dr Min’s lead, the Radiation Oncology department is also furthering medical research at SCUH, with three students in the department undertaking PhDs in MRI guided radiotherapy. The MRI Simulator will allow the students to continue and expand their research projects.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Interview and photo opportunities will be available with several members of the Radiation Oncology team, as well as local patient Adam Wheeler.

WHEN: Thursday 27 February, 9:45am (immediately following the Wishlist media opportunity)

WHERE: Sunshine Coast University Hospital, please meet at main reception.

ENDS

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