

Public Comments : July 12 2021

From: Harvey Case, President of Carteret Health Care "CHC"
Subject: Addition of a 2nd Linear Accelerator to Carteret Health Care

INTRODUCTION

REQUEST CHANGE TO 2022 SMFP

- Add a 2nd Linear Accelerator at CHC in 2022 SMFP

CHC CURRENT SITUATION

- CHC is a part of Service Area 24 which includes: Carteret, Craven, Jones and Pamlico Counties.
- Service Area 24 has two distinct health systems; one in Craven and one in Carteret.
- Current demand for RadOnc services in FY2020 at CHC exceeds SMFP efficient use standard of 6,750 Equivalent Simple Treatment Visits.
 - Normally, this demand for services would generate a NEED in the SMFP.
 - However, the other health system in Area 24 has two linear accelerators that averaged fewer ESTV's in 2020 – 4,825 to be specific.

CARTERET COUNTY IS UNIQUE

- Higher Cancer Rates:
 - Age of population – while the State's Median age is 36 years old, Carteret County is 48.6, which puts Carteret in very rare company
 - Age & Cancer Rates have a direct correlation..... with cancer rates rising as people age
- Growth:
 - Consistent with the past 5 years, CHC expects 7% annual growth trend for new cancer patients
 - Not yet included in Official State Projections, Carteret County is experiencing new population growth due to the Pandemic – with a surge of 2nd home owners now making Carteret County their new primary home
 - Carteret County expecting rapid growth associated with new Interstate 42
 - Carteret County expecting growth due to military investments coming to the area
 - Although not uniquely related to Carteret County, CHC is experiencing an increase in cancer survivors, which will generate future demand for follow up treatments.
 - Based on the age of our population and projected growth of our community, we are confident the local need/demand for radiation oncology will continue to grow and a 2nd linear accelerator in Carteret County will be required to meet our goal of providing **CARE CLOSE TO HOME.**
- Concerns with demand for local care outpacing supply
 - People familiar with Cancer, understand the great advantages for patients who are able to Access Care Close to Home.
 - Those familiar with Carteret County also understand the great challenges of travel. While Carteret County is blessed with many assets that attract people to the coast,

these assets come with huge challenges associated with heavy traffic patterns and extended drive times.

- Carteret County is also made up of **very rural/remote areas primarily in Eastern CC**, accessed only by winding 2-lane roads..... navigated through a maze of waterways. These rural areas are the homes of our some of the poorer communities in Carteret County where transportation is a real barrier.
- Travel Challenge Examples:
 - A trip from Beaufort (County Seat) to New Bern can take 1.5 hours each way; A trip from Sea Level, it is 2+ hours each way.
 - The challenges of doing that 4-hour trip five days a week for a month or more
 - The challenges of finding someone to drive a patient in what could be an 8- to 10- hour day, when travel, treatment, consulting, etc. is combined

BASED ON CURRENT SMFP GUIDELINES

- If Carteret County was in its own Geographic Service Area, we would meet the demand requirements for a 2nd Linear Accelerator based on our 2020 History alone (6,870 ESTV's)
- However, because Carteret County has a population of less than 125K, the State Plan combines Carteret County with Craven, Jones and Pamlico Counties.

OUR ASK

- With a passion to continue to meet the needs of our local cancer patients, we dread the day when we have to decide which patients can remain close to home, and which ones have to go to:
 - Travel to a new location
 - See a new doctor
 - Meet new caregivers
 - Leave their home cancer center/family
- **We respectfully ask for the 2022 Plan**, to create a special need for Carteret County alone, so that we can meet the needs of our unique population.
- **Timing is critical** because patient demand for local care will soon outpace our ability to supply this service CLOSE TO HOME to all. Understanding it will take three to four years from Plan to the Start of Operations.