

STURDY MEMORIAL AND SHIELDS RADIATION ONCOLOGY CENTER MANSFIELD COLLABORATE ON NEW TREATMENT ALTERNATIVE FOR EARLY STAGE BREAST CANCER

Mansfield, MA – February 2009 – Area women with early stage breast cancer that fit certain criteria now have a new treatment option. Shields Radiation Oncology Center Mansfield, a joint venture partnership with Sturdy Memorial Hospital and Morton Hospital now offers Axxent Electronic Brachytherapy. This is a treatment that uses a miniaturized X-ray source to deliver targeted radiation treatment directly to the cancer site under the supervision of a radiation oncologist. The new, safe treatment requires fewer sessions than traditional radiation therapy, making it more convenient for patients and their families, and resulting in less exposure to radiation and fewer side effects.

According to Marcy Bernstein, MD, Chief of Surgery at Sturdy Memorial Hospital, who offers this procedure, “This new treatment was trialed extensively before we considered adding it to our complement of breast care services. I’m excited to be able to offer it to breast cancer patients who meet the clinical criteria for treatment.”

H. Joseph Barthold, MD, Medical Director of Shields Oncology Services stated “Imagine some of our patients with adult children living across the country not being able to leave jobs and responsibilities for six weeks of treatments for their loved ones. Knowing that the treatment for breast cancer can be completed in five days can substantially improve patients’ and their families’ abilities to manage and plan treatment. Chances are greatly enhanced that patients will have the support needed for their treatment.”

Dr. Barthold added, “We have incorporated the Electronic Brachytherapy System into our cancer center in order to provide a revolutionary radiation treatment alternative to our breast cancer patients, more easily and conveniently”.

HOW IT WORKS

The initial procedure is performed by a breast surgeon. The surgeon will insert a balloon applicator tailored to the woman into the woman’s tumor cavity through a small incision in the breast. Part of the balloon applicator, called the shaft, will remain on the outside of the breast. The shaft is thin and flexible so it can be secured down and covered and can be easily tucked into a bra.

The X-ray source will be inserted into the applicator from outside the breast. Both the X-ray source and the applicator are then attached to a delivery device called a controller which turns the radiation on and off and moves the X-ray source through the applicator.

Each treatment takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. On the fifth day, after the final treatment is complete, the balloon applicator will be deflated and removed.

For more information regarding these new treatments, please log on to the Shields Radiation Oncology Center Mansfield website at www.srocmansfield.com.