Medical College of Ohio **Department of Radiation Therapy**

419-381-4172

419-381-4541/5114

3000 Arlington Avenue
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 10008
Toledo, Ohio 43699-0008

December 18, 1990

Chairperson
Department of Radiation Therapy (Year 2014)
Medical College of Ohio
Toledo, Ohio
USA

Dear Sir or Madam:

On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Founding of the Medical College of Ohio, I prepare this letter for your consideration. This is a bit difficult because, at this point in time, it is unclear whether there will even be a Medical College of Ohio 25 years hence, let alone a Department of Radiation Therapy!

The Institution in general, and this department in particular, are presently in the throes of massive financial and administrative problems. But, assuming that someone will read this letter twenty-five years hence, let me tell you a bit about the history of the Department of Radiation Therapy and something of the state-of-the-art of this discipline in 1990.

The Radiation Therapy Service began as a division of the Department of Radiology upon the arrival of a radiation oncologist on January 1, 1980. At that point, space had been designated beneath the courtyard and planter of the newly constructed Medical College Hospital for a radiation therapy unit. This comprised approximately 9000 square feet. The only piece of equipment that had been purchased (through the benefaction of the Jones Family and the Clement O. Miniger Foundation) was a Varian Clinac 18 Linear Accelerator which, because of political reasons, had been installed in the Toledo Hospital. This machine was subsequently moved to the new facility at the mch. Professional and technical staff were identified and recruited, and, by September 10th, 1980, the first patient, Mr. Aaron Caffey, was treated. In spite of severe budgetary restraints, the Department grew rapidly over the next two or three years to a point where 400 - 500 new cancer patients were seen in consultation annually. Three hundred and fifty to four hundred patients actually received treatment each year. The Department expanded to include three radiotherapists, a radiation physicist and a radiation biologist.

Radiation therapy became a separate department after five painful years in the Department of Radiology. In its first decade of operation, the Department distinguished itself nationally by becoming one of the early centers for intraoperative electron beam radiation therapy. The first international conference on this topic was held at MCO in 1986. This international group now meets on a regular basis. The first book dedicated to this therapeutic modality was organized and edited by Faculty of the Department of Radiation Therapy.

The Faculty of the Department of Radiation Therapy also contributed heavily to the understanding of physiologic responses to heat treatment, as there has been tremendous interest in this modality of adjunvant cancer treatment in recent decades.

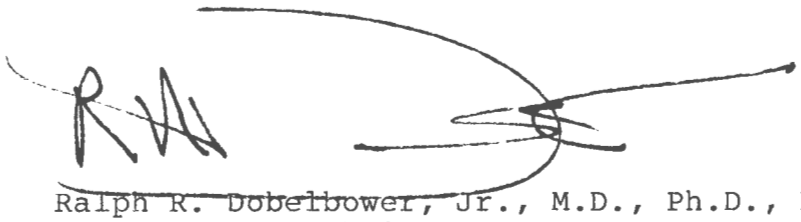
The Department of Radiation Therapy is currently internationally regarded as a center of excellence for the treatment of pancreatic cancer. Clinical research in this field has included precision high dose external beam radiation therapy, interstitial brachytherapy with ^{125}I sources, intraoperative electron beam therapy, post-operative external beam therapy, adjuvant chemotherapy and various combined modality regimens. At present, we are conducting a pilot study of pre-operative external beam therapy combined with 5-FU and leucovorin in an attempt to make unresectable pancreatic cancers resectable. At the time of operation, after a course of external beam therapy, we treat unresectable pancreatic cancers with intraoperative electron beam therapy and, should the tumor be resectable, we irradiate the tumor bed with electrons also.

In 1987, the Department at the Medical College of Ohio acquired clinical operations of the Marion Regional Cancer Center. In 1990, the Department opened the BVHA Radiation Therapy Treatment Center in conjunction with Blanchard Valley Hospital.

In the Year 1990, radiation therapy is a major form of cancer treatment. At present, cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States. Approximately one million new cancer cases are diagnosed in the United States annually. This figure excludes carcinomas-in-situ and non-melanoma skin cancers. If these highly-curable cancers were to be included in the number of new cancer cases, the number would be increased by over fifty percent. Roughly one-half million patients die of cancer in the United States annually. Surgery and radiation therapy continue to be the mainstays of curative treatment, but chemotherapy has become a major treatment modality over the last few decades. Immunotherapy has progressed to the stage of clinical trials and there is great hope that, with the developing technologies in genetic manipulation, great advances in the treatment of cancer are just around the corner.

It is my sincere hope that when you read this letter, it will bring a smile to your face because cancer has been eliminated as a health hazard. My prediction, however, is that it will continue to be the second leading cause of death in America. I hope this prediction is wrong.

Good luck!



Ralph R. Dobelbower, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., FACR
Professor and Chairman
Department of Radiation Therapy

RRD/lab