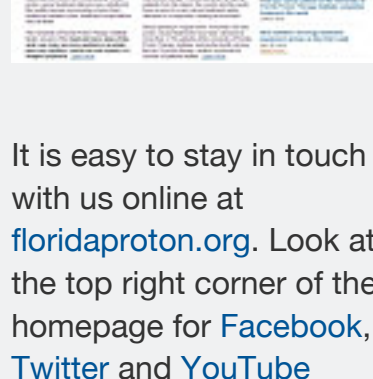


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IN OTHER NEWS

Keep In Touch



It is easy to stay in touch with us online at floridaproton.org. Look at the top right corner of the homepage for Facebook, Twitter and YouTube icons, click and join us in the social media conversation. Also on the right side of the homepage there is a button for VTOC Patient Portal. Click here to open your secure account, view your records, complete clinical trial questionnaires and communicate with your nurse case manager. Knowing how you are feeling during and after treatment is essential to providing you the best care possible and contributes to the care of future patients.

Community Calendar

Mark your calendar and join us when we are in a town near you.

October 11-12, 2015

Play Golf. Fight Cancer®
World Golf Village

About This Newsletter

The *Precision* Newsletter is an electronic-only publication that is distributed by email. Each issue is sent monthly to patients, alumni patients and friends of the University of Florida Health Proton Therapy Institute. As the official newsletter of the Institute, the content is compiled and prepared by our communications representative and approved by the editor Stuart Klein, executive director of UF Health Proton Therapy Institute. Special bulletin newsletters may occasionally be prepared when timely topics and new developments in proton therapy occur. To opt out of receiving the email newsletter, simply [click here to unsubscribe](#). We will make every effort to remove your name from the list.

If you would like to send a Letter to the Editor, [please click here](#).

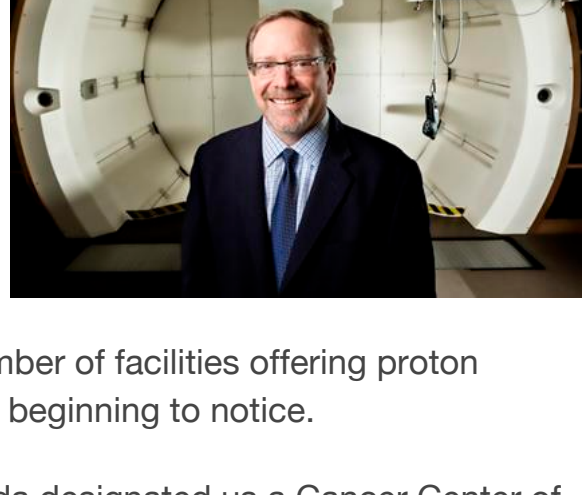
Sign-Up Today



If you don't already receive this e-newsletter, [click here to add your name to the list](#). You will also be notified of any future events in your area.

Message from Stuart Klein, Executive Director

Sometimes we hear people say that proton therapy is the best kept secret. Often patients learn about the treatment by doing their own research online or they hear about it from a friend or family member. But as our proton therapy community of survivors increases, and the number of facilities offering proton therapy grows, more people are beginning to notice.



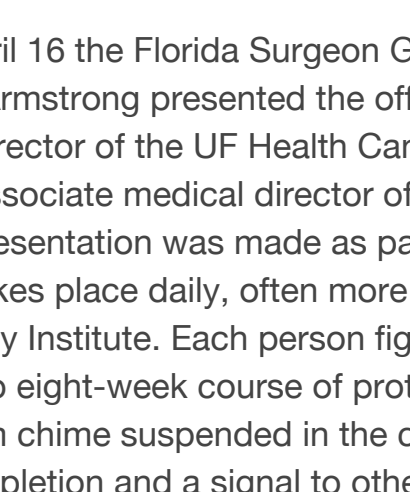
Just last week the State of Florida designated us a Cancer Center of Excellence as part of the UF Health Cancer Center. Two weeks ago, the *Ellen DeGeneres Show* had an inspirational story about a young woman treated with proton therapy.

As more centers open, many at some of the most well-known and respected medical institutions in the U.S., more people will hear about proton therapy. I invite you to join the conversation and add your proton therapy story to [our new video page on floridaproton.org](#). Together, we can publicize the benefits for cancer patients everywhere.

Stuart Klein

Cancer Center of Excellence

By Theresa Edwards Makrush



The first ever Cancer Center of Excellence designations by the State of Florida were awarded last month, and the UF Health Cancer Center, which includes UF Health Proton Therapy Institute, was one of four centers recognized.

On April 16 the Florida Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong presented the official designation to Paul Okunieff, MD, director of the UF Health Cancer Center, and Randal Henderson, MD, associate medical director of UF Health Proton Therapy Institute. The presentation was made as part of the chime-ringing ceremony that takes place daily, often more than once, at the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute. Each person fighting cancer that completes the four- to eight-week course of proton therapy rings the eight-foot custom chime suspended in the center of the main lobby as a symbol of completion and a signal to others to share in the celebration.

"The UF Health Proton Therapy Institute is remarkable for its state-of-the-art radiation treatment, commitment to clinical research and dedication to high-quality care for people fighting cancer," said Dr. Armstrong. "It is an honor to be here today to witness this care in action as Mr. Scarborough rings the chime to celebrate the completion of his journey – the cure of his cancer." To hear more of his comments, [click this link to watch a video](#).

Steve Scarborough is a Jacksonville Beach, Fla., resident who was treated for prostate cancer. He is the 3,575th person treated for prostate cancer with proton therapy at UF Health Proton Therapy Institute since it opened on August 14, 2006.

Steve was diagnosed with prostate cancer nearly three years ago, but after talking with his doctor and doing his own research, he delayed treatment, saying he didn't want to risk having a reduced quality of life following treatment. That was before he heard about proton therapy. He learned about proton therapy from a friend who had just been treated at UF Health Proton Therapy Institute.

"I did some research and learned proton therapy has the least side effects, highest success rates and fastest recovery time," said Steve. He also liked that he wouldn't have any downtime and could continue his active life as a musician performing at area restaurants, nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

"The treatment experience has been fantastic. The people are awesome. The level of care is unbelievable," said Steve. "They create such a positive experience here that cancer's not scary."

Nearly 6,000 people from 49 states and 29 countries have had proton therapy at the facility for cancers located in the brain, head and neck, lung, lymphoma, eye, breast, pancreas and prostate. In exit surveys, 98 percent of patients say they would recommend the facility to a family member or friend who needed radiation treatment.

The Cancer Center of Excellence designation by the Florida Department of Health recognizes hospitals and treatment centers that demonstrate excellence in patient-centered coordinated care for people undergoing cancer treatment.

The Florida Legislature established the designation through statute to encourage excellence in cancer care, attract and retain the best cancer care providers in the state and help Florida be recognized nationally as a preferred destination for quality cancer care, according to the Department of Health website.

The Department of Health based the designation on a "systems approach" to improving the quality of cancer care, focused on three areas: the health care organization, the health care team members and patients and family members.

To watch more of the award presentation, [click here](#).



Florida Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong (far left) presents the award to Dr. Paul Okunieff, UF Health Cancer Center Director, and Dr. Randal Henderson, UF Health Proton Therapy Institute Associate Medical Director, with Dr. Kelli Wells, Florida Department of Health Duval County Director, and Steve Scarborough, proton therapy alum.



Steve Scarborough rings Aud's Chime on behalf of all proton therapy alumni during the Cancer Center of Excellence Award presentation.

Proton volunteers make a positive difference



By Bradlee Robbert

Many times people want to give back to their community, but they don't know how. Volunteering is one of the most impactful ways to give back because it incorporates every element of charity: time, effort, and money. And it can be personally rewarding to roll up your sleeves alongside other volunteers and help someone in need.

During April's National Volunteer Week, UF Health Proton Therapy Institute recognizes our partnership with all of our volunteers. Each one donates their precious time to join forces with us for the betterment of patient care. To date we have had more than 15 volunteers donate more than 4,000 total volunteer hours. Some of our volunteers are past patients and caregivers and others are local citizens looking to give back. Currently we have nine active volunteers donating over 20 hours of time per week: Anna, Bob, David, Isreal, Judy, Marilyn, Michael, Noah, and Ruby. Each volunteer uses their unique abilities to enhance patient care. Some work in the back office helping us catch up on paperwork; while others interact with patients offering a friendly smile and a warm cup of coffee.

In addition, our most tenured volunteer, Ms. Ruby, has donated more than 1,000 hours of service during her eight years volunteering at UF Health Proton Therapy Institute. Because of all of her volunteer efforts both here and for other organizations, she has been awarded the HandsOn Faith Award from HandsOn Jacksonville, the leading community organization that connects volunteers with nonprofit needs. We would like to congratulate Ms. Ruby on her deserved accomplishment, and thank her and all of our volunteers for their volunteer services.

If you are interested in volunteering at UF Health Proton Therapy Institute, please contact the Patient Services Department at 904-588-1251 or brobbert@floridaproton.org. We look forward to partnering with more volunteers to enhance our world-class patient care.

Enhanced VTOC means rapid, secure communication

By Monika P. Krull

UF Health Proton Therapy Institute now offers patients secure messaging as the way to communicate electronically with their health care team on relevant health information. No other form of electronic communication with patients that contains relevant health information will be used.

This system is available to all our patients through their patient portal in Vision Tree Optimal Care (VTOC) and is similar to a regular email, allowing our patients to write a message, review sent messages and maintain a record of these conversations.

VTOC Secure Messaging System improves the connection between patient and their health care team. It can be used to promote care coordination between visits, handle routine health issues, address patient questions and concerns, and help patients better manage their conditions. It can also be very convenient for handling routine nonclinical tasks such as medication refills and referrals. It is not meant to be a replacement for an in-person visit, and should not be used in case of emergencies. But some exchanges between patients and their health care team may not need an appointment making this communication system very useful.

To use the secure messaging feature, a patient must log into their patient portal at www.optimalcare.com and click on the "Messages" tab. For help on how to send a message follow the instructions by [clicking on this link](#).

2015 National Proton Conference Recap

By Theresa Edwards Makrush

The 2015 National Proton Therapy Conference was held March 31-April 2 in Washington, D.C., and featured several presentations from UF Health Proton Therapy Institute. It was hosted by the National Association for Proton Therapy (NAPT), the official voice of the proton therapy community and an authoritative resource for the public to learn the most current information about proton therapy. More than 250 attendees representing operating and developing proton therapy centers, vendors and patient advocacy groups gathered to hear topics ranging from the latest medical evidence for protons to best practices in patient care.

Our medical director Nancy Mendenhall, MD, participated in a panel discussion on the priorities for research in proton therapy. She emphasized the need for careful study designs that provide meaningful answers in patient outcomes and stay within the bounds of medical ethics. "For physicians, it is always our first priority to be the patient's advocate," she said. "We can be a scientist, but we have to first be a physician and patient advocate." Nearly all of our patients are on an outcome tracking study. And we have 21 clinical trials open with excellent participation.

Zuofeng Li, DSc, is our director of physics and he chaired the session on Science & Technology – New Directions. Leading physicists from University of Pennsylvania, Loma Linda University, Scripps, and Anderson each provided insights to the science behind the treatment. "The trend to smaller proton therapy systems continues and will be made possible through superconducting magnets," said Dr. Li. "Meanwhile emerging technologies to further reduce non-targeted healthy tissue from radiation exposure show significant promise. All of these advances will mean more access for patients to safe, effective cancer treatment."

Our child life specialist Kim Ely gave a presentation on the role and value of a child life specialist in proton therapy. She explained how hands-on play, preview tours and distraction during treatment aids children with coping skills and reduce fear of procedures. Since our child life specialist program began, we have reduced the number of children ages 5-7 who require sedation in order to receive treatment.

Keynote speaker Dr. Wyatt Decker, vice president of Mayo Clinic and CEO of Mayo Clinic Arizona, asserted that every patient deserves access to proton therapy. "Enough is known about proton beam and enough benefit is being provided that it should be standard therapy for many of today's cancers," he said.

Even as more proton therapy centers are due to open and more medical evidence for the use of proton therapy in multiple cancers increases, health insurance companies are limiting access to the treatment by not including it in the policies they write.

NAPT issued an updated document that can serve as a model health insurance policy that lists 375 studies published in peer-reviewed medical journals, including 15 significant and compelling articles within the last 12 months. **The model health insurance policy** is approved by the leading proton therapy scientific association Particle Therapy Co-Operative Group-North America and by the Alliance of Dedicated Cancer Centers, a group of 11 nationally and internationally recognized cancer centers. Insurers are urged to increase the number of cancers treated with protons in the coverage they include in health insurance policies.

"As more of the premier medical institutions are slated to open proton therapy centers in 2015, the proton therapy community, including patients and alumni patients, can expect to have a louder voice to raise awareness in medicine, government, health insurance companies and the general public that proton therapy is a valuable treatment in the fight against cancer and in preserving quality of life following treatment," said Stuart Klein, chairman of the National Association of Proton Therapy.

New website page, starring you



By Theresa Edwards Makrush

There is now an easy and creative way for you to let others know what proton therapy has meant to you. All you need is a video recording device, the camera on your smartphone will do, and an Internet connection. [We've added a page to floridaproton.org where people can view testimonials from proton alumni](#). This page is where you upload your videos, too. Take a look at a few of the videos that some of our alumni have already shared and then get started on your own. We look forward to seeing and hearing about the things you are doing after treatment.