



NEWS RELEASE

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UF Health Proton Therapy Institute commemorates 15 year anniversary

Physicians and staff continue to focus on patients during pandemic while looking towards the future

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Oct 13, 2021) – The University of Florida Health Proton Therapy Institute, a nonprofit regional resource for high-quality, effective proton therapy in Jacksonville, is commemorating 15 years of patient care, research and innovation in 2021. The physicians and staff have continued to welcome existing and new patients with cancer throughout the COVID-19 pandemic utilizing enhanced safety measures, guided by the CDC, ASTRO and UF Health, so patients can receive high-quality radiation oncology care, including proton therapy, as they have since the institute opened its doors.

The UF Health Proton Therapy Institute opened in 2006 with one treatment room and quickly expanded to treating 100 patients each day in just 19 months, a first for any proton therapy center. The institute has treated more than 9,700 proton patients since opening, including nearly 2,000 pediatric patients.

“Over the last 15 years, the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute has thrived, delivering leading-edge treatment coupled with compassionate, patient-centered care. We are very proud to recognize this anniversary and will continue to blaze a path in radiation oncology treatment and practice in the future,” said Stuart Klein, executive director of the institute.

When it opened, the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute was the first proton therapy facility in the Southeast U.S. and the fifth in the nation. Today, the institute continues to make advances in treating cancer with proton therapy. Some highlights include:

- The institute has developed more experience in pediatric proton therapy over the past decade than anywhere else in the country. Its team has authored many leading studies on proton therapy for pediatric ependymoma, craniopharyngioma, lymphoma, low-grade glioma, rhabdomyosarcoma, Ewing sarcoma, and nasopharyngeal carcinoma.
- The experience and expertise of the medical team and staff is internationally recognized, and patients from all 50 states and 33 countries have been treated at the institute. While it was developing proton therapy facilities of its own, the National Health Service in the United Kingdom referred patients to the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute. From Dec. 2009 to March 2019, 864 patients from the UK were treated in Jacksonville.
- To date, the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute has opened 65 clinical trials. Of those, 36 are completed and more than 250 articles have been published in peer-reviewed medical journals. Several prostate cancer studies served as early evidence of proton therapy's efficacy for both tumor control and excellent quality of life for patients after treatment. A study is underway on the 10-year outcomes for prostate cancer patients.
- The UF Health Proton Therapy Institute has one of the most versatile proton therapy systems, offering both double scattering and pencil beam scanning technologies, which enables the institute to treat the broadest possible spectrum of patients. Cancers located in the eye, esophagus, head and neck, brain, breast, liver, lung, base of the skull, central nervous system, soft tissue (sarcoma), lymphoma, pancreas, pituitary and prostate are being treated today the facility.

With enhanced safety measures and increased use of telemedicine visits, the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute continues to treat patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the institute expanded its telemedicine capabilities to include virtual consultations with physicians and began hosting the first in a series of free, virtual continuing medical education courses. In 2021, UF Health Proton Therapy Institute launched a redesigned website which makes it even easier for current and prospective patients to navigate the site.

By 2022, an expansion project will be completed and there will be a total of five treatment rooms in operation at that time. The UF Health Proton Therapy Institute continues to expand and lead proton therapy into the future.

About UF Health Proton Therapy Institute

UF Health Proton Therapy Institute is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization affiliated with the UF College of Medicine and the UF Health Cancer Center, a Florida Cancer Center of Excellence, dedicated to delivering state-of-the-art cancer treatment and setting new standards for treating and curing cancer. It is an accredited radiation oncology facility by the American College of Radiology. The cancer treatment facility houses both conventional radiation and proton therapy, and delivers proton therapy to 100 patients a day. For more information about the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute, please visit www.floridaproton.org, or call 904.588.1800.

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