

Arnold Palmer Prostate Center Garnering International Acclaim



Nurse Coordinator Cindy Huff confers with Eisenhower patient Mike Adams.

When the Arnold Palmer Prostate Center opened in January 2005, its goal was to provide skilled, coordinated and compassionate treatment to the men of the Coachella Valley and beyond – perhaps to the entire nation. But what the organizers and professionals behind the Center did not realize at the time was the degree to which the Center would garner international acclaim.

Today, nearly 50 percent of the cancer patients seeking treatment at the Arnold Palmer Prostate Center come from outside of California, with more than 30 percent coming from outside the United States, some as far away as Germany and Sweden.

"It's primarily through the advice and suggestion of friends," says Cindy Huff, RN, Nurse Coordinator for the Arnold Palmer Prostate Center. "People are hearing about the great service that we provide here from other people, and that we're part of a 100 Top Hospital®. They're then finding out more about us through our informative Web site."

The Center, which is located in the \$65 million Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center, boasts a unique mix of state-of-the-art technology and a highly qualified and caring medical team. That team includes radiation oncologists, urologists, medical oncologists and – something quite unique to cancer programs – a nurse coordinator, who helps facilitate the process from diagnosis to treatment to after care.

"For three or four months, I take personal responsibility for our patients as nurse coordinator, providing educational information, arranging all the tests, and even helping them with lodging," Huff exclaims. "And, it's not just me, but the rest of the team as well. We get them the information they need to make the decisions they need to make."

Perhaps what's most surprising is that this cornucopia of support services, which would not typically be covered by Medicare, is provided free to the patient and their families – perhaps another reason cancer patients are flocking from near and far to access these services.

"We have many patients from Canada and Britain," Huff says. "There's often a waiting list in Canada for the medical services that we provide, and these men do not want to, or sometimes, can't wait six months to a year for treatment."

Many of the medical services and procedures offered at the Center are not available outside of the country. Services like Brachytherapy (radioactive seed implants), External Beam Radiation Therapy and Stereotactic Radiosurgery, are either not available or offered on a limited basis in Canada and Britain. Additionally, when patients do find these specialized services elsewhere, they often return to Eisenhower Medical Center and the Arnold Palmer Prostate Center for the quality of care and the personal touch that Eisenhower is able to deliver.

"We have people call and say, 'I see that Arnold Palmer's name is on this Center and I know that he wouldn't attach his name to anything other than a quality program,'" Huff explains. "It's a huge responsibility for the people who work here to continually deliver such a high degree of quality care. But we do it. Others say, 'I want someone who will take care of me...look after my best interest,' and that's what we do here. My personal motto is 'Five minutes of worry is five minutes too long.' With the support of the community, the donors, and Arnold Palmer, this program will be able to reach out to men with prostate cancer around the world for a long time to come."