The Arnold Palmer Prostate Center

“IT’S ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE. IT’S ABOUT SAVING LIVES.”

By: Roxanne Jones

Left to right: Monica Khanna, MD, Radiation Oncologist; John Stevenson, MD, Radiation Oncologist; Cindy Huff, RN, Nurse Coordinator; and David Hsu, MD, Radiation Oncologist

When the Arnold Palmer Prostate Center at Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center celebrates its grand opening in mid-January, men in the Coachella Valley and the entire nation will have a specialized prostate cancer treatment center that offers an unparalleled blend of state-of-the-art technology, a highly skilled medical team, and a coordinated, compassionate approach to treatment. Located in the $65 million Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center, the new Arnold Palmer Prostate Center is the culmination of a vision for a center of excellence in prostate cancer treatment, and a golf legend’s commitment to early cancer detection.

“Eisenhower has had a cutting-edge radioactive seed implant program in place for several years,” explains John Stevenson, MD, a Board Certified Radiation Oncologist who is Medical Director of the new facility. In fact, Eisenhower Medical Center was the first hospital in the Coachella Valley to offer radioactive seed implants (known as brachytherapy) for the treatment of prostate cancer. “We’ve been treating about 100 patients a year with this modality,” he notes.

Dr. Stevenson is uniquely qualified to head the new Center, having launched the brachytherapy program at UCLA in 1991, and run the program for nearly two years. He also headed a similar program in Santa Barbara before coming to Eisenhower in 2001. He estimates that he’s performed more than 750 seed implantations in his medical career.

The Genesis Of The New Center

“The idea for the center was born out of a belief that I had regarding the unique combination of the Coachella Valley and the focus on cancer here at Eisenhower,” says Dr. Stevenson. “We could not only continue to serve Valley residents, but also attract people from across the country. People like to visit this area, and we already have the great Eisenhower Medical Center infrastructure in place.

“But I realized that to attract people from outside the region, we’d need a high-profile name to raise our visibility, a name that would be associated with integrity, quality, and a never ending pursuit of excellence,” Dr. Stevenson adds. “Arnold Palmer seemed like a natural and was clearly my first choice. This area is known for golf, he has so many local ties, and he’s a prostate cancer survivor. If he’d lend his name to this endeavor, it would put us on the map fast. So I approached Michael Landes [President of the Eisenhower Medical Center Foundation] with my idea.”

He liked it. “It was a perfect fit with Eisenhower’s existing focus on cancer care,” Landes recalls. With the encouragement of Eisenhower President and Chief Executive Officer G. Aubrey Serfling, Landes turned to Eisenhower’s trustees and board members for help in approaching Arnold Palmer. John Curci – already the champion behind the Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center – made the connection with Palmer. After a single meeting at which the concept of the new prostate center was presented to Arnold Palmer, “The King” said yes. “It’s About Saving Lives.”

“I am very pleased to lend my support and my name to the new prostate center at the Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center,” Palmer says. “It is truly a state-of-the-art, full-service medical center for the treatment of this widespread disease. I am a living example that the best chance for survival of prostate cancer is early detection, and I can’t emphasize that enough to every man within earshot.” Palmer underwent successful prostate cancer surgery, combined with radiation therapy, in 1997.

“The message that I have been expounding since my own experience seems to be getting through,” he continues. “More and more men are coming up to me and telling me that they’re getting their PSAs [prostate specific antigen tests]. The Arnold Palmer Prostate Center is about making a difference. It’s about saving lives.” In fact, the Center will amplify this message with a national public service campaign to educate men about the risks of prostate cancer, treatment options, and the importance of early detection.

“We are thrilled to have Arnold Palmer on our team,” says G. Aubrey Serfling. “He is passionate about healing, educated about the need for awareness, and committed to finding a cure for prostate cancer, which is the second most common cancer in men (after skin cancer), affecting 230,000 men this year alone.” When prostate cancer is found early, however – while it is still in the prostate or only in nearby areas – the five-year survival rate is nearly 100 percent.

State-Of-The-Art Treatment Options There also are numerous, state-of-the-art treatment options for prostate cancer – all of which are offered at the new Arnold Palmer Prostate Center at Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center. In addition to brachytherapy, patients here can have access to external radiation therapy, intensity modulated radiation therapy, advanced nerve-sparing surgery, cryotherapy, and chemotherapy.

• Brachytherapy uses radioactive seeds, about the size of a grain of rice, stranded on a synthetic filament and implanted in the prostate gland. The seeds emit a low level radiation that destroys cancer cells while preserving healthy tissue. The first facility on the West Coast utilizing the IsoStrand™ technology, the Arnold Palmer Prostate Center provides immediate, onsite creation of the stranded radioactive seeds, reducing the typical two-week waiting time to two days to complete the treatment. (For more details about the advantages of the innovative IsoStrand technology, see “What’s New”)

• High Dose Rate (HDR) B r a c h y t h e r a p y concentrates radiation in a small area from a radioactive source temporarily placed inside the body, and is one of the most precise forms of radiation therapy available.

• External Beam Radiation Therapy (EBT) uses state-of-theart linear accelerators to deliver radiation to a precise location within the body. A series of three-dimensional radiation beams are tailored to the size, shape and location of the tumor or cancer cells to stop their growth and reproduction while sparing the surrounding healthy tissue.

• Image Guided Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT), one of most significant innovations in cancer treatment in the past three decades, treats tumors that were previously considered untreatable due to their size or location with an extremely precise variable beam intensity.

• Stereotactic Radiosurgery is a non-surgical, non-invasive method of delivering a precise, robotically-guided dose of intense radiation to a tumor. The beams of radiation, with highly sophisticated computer software, reshape continuously matching the size and shape of the tumor, allowing a full treatment course in as few as five days. (For more details about stereotactic radiosurgery, see the Program Spotlight)

• Nerve-sparing Prostatectomy is a modified form of radical prostatectomy. When prostate nerves are cancer-free, the prostate gland only is removed and the nerves are preserved. The Arnold Palmer Prostate Center also offers ancillary services such as nutritional guidance, exercise and meditation therapies, counseling, and support groups.

The Personal Touch

When you first arrive at the Arnold Palmer Prostate Center, your personal nurse coordinator will be waiting to meet with you and your family. She will coordinate and optimize your time at the Center, and will arrange any follow-up visits. A special conference is held with our physicians, you and your family to review your treatment options. Your nurse coordinator will be right at your side to help answer questions and care for your every need. The goal is to help you determine the best possible treatment option for your condition, your family and your quality of life. Just A Phone Call Away

“Eisenhower has relationships with several hotels, travel services and other service providers to make your trip to the Coachella Valley as effortless and comfortable as possible,” Cindy Huff, RN, Nurse Coordinator notes.” With a single phone call to us, we will arrange your medical care and serve as a resource for you to arrange your stay in the desert.”

“We’re not looking to be the biggest prostate cancer center,” adds Monica Khanna, MD, Radiation Oncologist. “But we do intend to offer the highest quality care, the most convenience, and to do the absolute best job for those who want that experience.”

For more information about the Arnold Palmer Prostate Center at Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center, please call 760-674-3838. Learn more about Arnold Palmer in a candid interview . For a referral for an Eisenhower physician or specialist, call our Physician Referral Service, 760-568-2273.

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