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Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare first in state to offer latest radiosurgery technology

Milwaukee, January 23, 2008 – Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare today announced it will begin operating the most advanced cancer fighting technology in Wisconsin by the end of the month. The two new systems, Novalis and Trilogy, use “shaped beam radiosurgery” to allow physicians to treat cancers with radiation more precisely than ever before and in a shorter period of time.

The non-invasive treatments are delivered on an outpatient basis with none of the side effects of traditional surgery and radiation therapy. No incisions are made and no anesthetic is required, so patients can return to their normal routine the same day in most instances.

“We are excited to bring the advanced technology of the Novalis and Trilogy systems to our patients,” said Dr. Stuart Blacher, radiation oncologist with Wheaton Franciscan Cancer Care. “The ability of these systems to precisely pinpoint tumors of all sizes while preserving healthy tissue is truly remarkable. It makes it possible to use radiosurgery to treat brain, lung, prostate and other cancers.”

Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare invested nearly \$11 million in the two systems. Trilogy is scheduled to go online at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – All Saints in late January, while Novalis will begin operating at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – St. Joseph’s Sherman Center for Cancer Care in early February.

“We are proud to be the first in Wisconsin to offer the unique combination of treatment planning, and radiation beam shaping and delivery that Novalis provides,” said John Oliverio, Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare President and Chief Executive Officer. “The Trilogy system also allows us to treat a wider range of cancers more precisely, in less time, and with fewer side effects. Our investment in this amazing technology underscores our commitment to deliver quality care to our patients.

“There is no better technology available in Wisconsin, including Gamma Knife and CyberKnife,” Oliverio said.

Radiosurgery was first implemented for the treatment of brain tumors where pinpoint precision is required to focus radiation on tumors or lesions close to critical structures within the brain. It is now also used to treat spine, prostate, liver, lung and other cancers. The new generation of shaped beam radiosurgery is delivered either in a single session with a high dose of radiation, also known as stereotactic radiosurgery, or in a series of treatments over a period of time, known as fractionated stereotactic radiotherapy.

Novalis, from BrainLAB, and Trilogy from Varian Medical Systems, represent the very latest in high-precision cancer care for patients undergoing stereotactic radiosurgery or fractionated stereotactic radiotherapy. The radiation beams are shaped to match the exact contour of the tumor or lesion so that even irregularly shaped tumors or lesions can receive doses of radiation totally consistent with that prescribed, effectively destroying the tumor while sparing healthy surrounding tissue. Sophisticated software calculates the ideal access points to the tumor or lesion and defines the treatment plan.

“This technology is so precise,” said Dr. James Taylor, Radiation Oncologist with Wheaton Franciscan Cancer Care, “that a special ‘respiratory gating system’ takes into account the tumor movement that can occur as a patient breathes, turning the beam off and on, so that treatment is delivered only when the tumor is stationary.”

During treatment, the gantry and table move in a synchronized manner so the radiation penetrates the tumor from different angles. This allows normal tissue and critical structures to receive the best possible protection from radiation, while ensuring that the maximum dosage is delivered to the tumor.

“The length of each treatment with shaped beam radiosurgery is about one-third the time needed with other radiosurgery systems,” said Dr. Oh-Hoon Kwon, a radiation oncologist with Wheaton Franciscan Cancer Care. “This will dramatically add to the comfort of our patients as they will be required to lay motionless for significantly shorter periods of time.” Shorter treatment sessions, he added, may also lessen the anxiety of patients undergoing cancer treatment.

Tim Richman, Vice President of Oncology and Rehabilitation Services said Novalis and Trilogy deliver other efficiencies as well. “The systems require fewer staff to operate and shorter treatment times per patient. That means more patients can be scheduled in a single day, which helps to contain health care costs while delivering the highest possible quality,” Richman said.

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Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare (WFH) is a Catholic, not-for-profit organization with more than 100 health and shelter organizations in Wisconsin, Iowa, Colorado, and Illinois. In Southeast Wisconsin, WFH is co-sponsored by the Wheaton Franciscan and Felician Sisters and nearly than 12,000 associates, making it the second largest private employer in the area. Hospitals include All Saints in Racine, St. Joseph and St. Francis in Milwaukee, Elmbrook Memorial in Brookfield, and The Wisconsin Heart Hospital in Wauwatosa. The region also includes Wheaton Franciscan Medical Group with 280 primary care and specialty physicians in more than 40 locations, a network of outpatient centers, four long-term care facilities, Home Health, and Hospice, two Family Medicine Residency programs in collaboration with the Medical College of Wisconsin, retail pharmacies, and a full- service medical and pathology laboratory.