

Physician CONNECT

Lakeland Radiation Oncology

The Lakeland Radiation Oncology department collaborates with Lakeland's entire cancer team—physicians, nurses, patient navigators, and specialized support staff—to ensure patients receive accurate diagnoses and individualized treatments for the best possible cancer care.



You can be confident that your patients will receive prompt attention, as the average turnaround time between initial referral and consultation for Lakeland Radiation Oncology is seven days (according to recent statistics).



For the second year in a row, Lakeland Radiation Oncology ranked in the top ten percent in two key patient satisfaction metrics—overall rating of care and likelihood to recommend (per Press Ganey patient satisfaction surveys).



Lakeland's cancer program is accredited by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons, which signifies that the program has voluntarily committed to providing the highest level of quality cancer care. Lakeland also holds accreditation in radiation oncology by the American College of Radiology, an honor that represents the highest level of quality and patient safety.

Treatment

The Lakeland Radiation Oncology team provides both external beam (when a machine outside the body aims radiation at cancer cells) and internal radiation therapy (when radiation is put inside the body, in or near the cancer cells).

External Beam Radiation

For external beam irradiation, Lakeland offers a total of eight different energies to treat cancer of different thicknesses (6 MV, 15 MV, 6 MeV, 9MeV, 12MeV, 16 MeV, 20 MeV, 70 KVP, 100 KVP). We utilize different techniques to treat lesions of different size, shape, and locations to optimize the therapeutic ratio and minimize the side effects.

Examples of such techniques include:

1. 2D —Two-dimensional radiation therapy
2. 3DCRT –Three-dimensional conformal radiation therapy
3. IMRT –Intensity-modulated radiation therapy
4. IGRT –Image-guided radiation therapy
5. SRS – Stereotactic radiosurgery
6. SBRT –Stereotactic body radiation therapy
7. VMAT –Volumetric modulated arc therapy

Lakeland has two Varian linear accelerators. The iX and True Beam deliver radiation treatment with on-board imaging; i.e., the treatment area is imaged on a daily basis to ensure the accuracy of the delivery of radiation. This is a big contrast to using a marker on the skin of the patient as set-up and positioning. The Radiation Oncology team has a dedicated superficial x-ray machine for skin cancer only.

Internal Radiation

For internal radiation, either interstitial or intra-cavitary/intraluminal, Lakeland's Radiation Oncology team uses different radionuclides, like Iridium-192 (lung cancer with bronchial obstruction, esophageal cancer, breast cancer [mammosite], and endometrial cancer), Cesium-137 (cervical cancer), Iodine-125, or Palladium-103 (prostate implant)

In collaboration with Lakeland Nuclear Medicine, we offer the following specialized treatments:

1. Iodine-131 for Thyroid cancer or hyperthyroidism/ Graves' disease
2. Zevalin (Yttrium-90) for follicular lymphoma as first-line therapy after chemotherapy
3. Radium-223 for castration resistant bony metastasis from prostate cancer
4. Samarium-153 for painful bony metastasis from cancer

Physician Profiles



Peter Lai, PhD, MD

Radiation Oncologist and Medical Director

A board-certified radiation oncologist, Dr. Lai received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia. He completed a PhD in biophysics from the University of Illinois, as well as a research fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Lai then completed a residency in radiation oncology at The Johns Hopkins Hospital.

“Radiation is one of the three modalities in treating patients with cancer, including chemotherapy, surgery and radiation,” said Dr. Lai. “We work closely together with other specialties. Sometimes they refer the patient to me for external radiation, and sometimes we work together in the operating room.”

Dr. Lai has held a number of distinguished medical appointments and academic positions, and has published extensively in medical journals, including chapters in medical textbooks. He is a frequent presenter at medical conferences and symposia around the world. A native of Hong Kong, Dr. Lai is a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army Reserves and served in the Persian Gulf War.

“In cancer treatment, the greatest joy is to cure the patient,” said Dr. Lai.



Benjamin Gielda, MD

Radiation Oncologist

Dr. Gielda earned his medical degree at University of Michigan and completed his residency in radiation oncology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. A board-certified radiation oncologist, he is proficient in prostate brachytherapy, along with intracranial and extracranial radiosurgery.

“I directly oversee all of the patient’s treatment planning by figuring out how to hit the target that we want to hit with radiation while sparing all the normal surrounding tissues as much as we possibly can,” Dr. Gielda said. “There is a great deal of contact with the patients—you really get to know them and take care of them, and you follow them over long periods of time.”

Prior to joining Lakeland HealthCare, Dr. Gielda cared for patients at Traverse Bay Radiation Oncology in Traverse City, Michigan. Dr. Gielda has authored over 20 peer-reviewed publications, published a textbook chapter, and has diverse research interests, including breast, lung, head, neck, and prostate cancers.

“It’s rewarding to provide something for people that’s very important to their care and has such a great impact on their lives,” Dr. Gielda said.

For more information about Lakeland Radiation Oncology, contact **Barbara Schmidtman, CNMT, MA, Radiation Oncology Manager**, at (269) 983-8698 or bjschmidtman@lakelandhealth.org

To make an appointment, contact Lakeland Radiation Oncology at (269) 983-8888