

## Martin Memorial Cancer Center

A Small Community Facility Sets National Benchmark Scores

**M**artin Memorial Cancer Center in Stuart, Fla., which opened its doors May 3, 1999, was a true collaboration between Martin Memorial Health Systems, a not-for-profit organization, and the community it serves. Through philanthropy, Martin Memorial Health Systems raised \$7.5 million in about one year to assist with building the 41,000-square-foot, \$15 million comprehensive cancer center.

A Steering Committee of prominent and highly motivated members

who all had an interest in world-class cancer care for the local community spearheaded the building efforts. Focus groups comprised of community members, including patients, families, nurses, and educators, were set up to identify the needs and expectations of a cancer patient, the design and layout of the cancer center, the services that would be offered, the staff needed to be hired, appropriate affiliations, and professional education needs. The response that came back from the community showed a need for financial guidance, information on treatments, support groups, access to clinical trials, and, of course, a juice and coffee bar for patients waiting for treatment or simply wanting nourishment. The cancer center was able to accommodate the majority of these requests.

### State-of-the-Art Facility

The freestanding facility consists of a Radiation Oncology Department (12,500 sq. ft.) on the first floor, a Patient Resource Center (14,000 sq. ft.) on the second floor, and three private hematology-oncology physician practices and Martin Memorial's

Outpatient Infusion Suite (14,000 sq. ft.) on the third floor.

The Radiation Therapy Department has two linear accelerators, offering the latest 3-D treatment planning and IMRT, as well as a CT simulator and planning system. Each day of the busy Florida winter season, the cancer center treats an average of 100 patients.

Martin Memorial's Radiation Department was a beta site for a major manufacturer of IMRT equipment, and teaching institutes from around the country come to Martin Memorial to observe all aspects of the radiation therapy program. The Radiation Therapy Department was also featured in a national television ad that showed the sophisticated therapy that can be offered by a cancer center outside of a university setting.

The cancer center's second floor is dedicated to patient resources, including support groups, nutrition counseling, complementary and alternative medicine workshops, clinical trials, and genetic screening.

Research is becoming an increasingly important component of the cancer program. Martin Memorial

### Vital Statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 336
- Dedicated cancer unit beds: 26
- Number of new analytic cancer cases seen per year: 1,774
- Managed care penetration in Florida: 32 percent

### Selected Patient Support Services

- Outpatient nutritional counseling is available by a licensed clinical dietitian specializing in oncology patients.
- A clinical oncology social worker oversees 13 monthly support groups in addition to assisting with financial issues, transportation, and psychosocial counseling.
- Volunteers from the American Cancer Society, Hospice, and Molly's House are available to help patients and their families with information about their own organizations and other community resources.



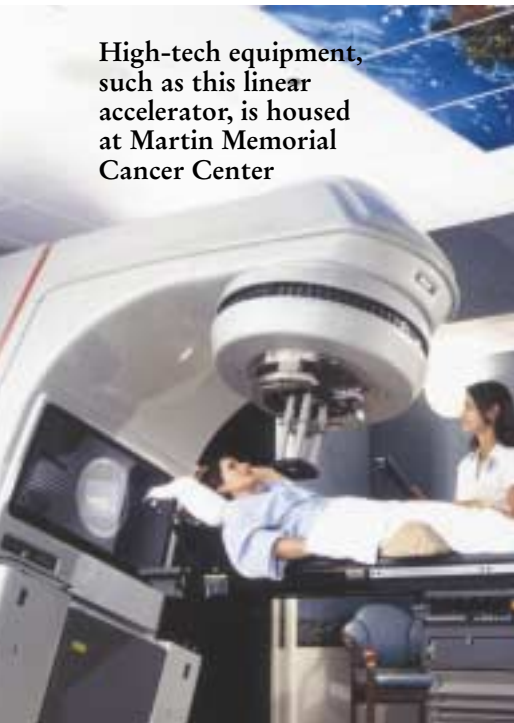
Martin Memorial Cancer Center in Stuart, Fla.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MARTIN MEMORIAL CANCER CENTER

# PROFILE

Cancer Center ranked fifth in the nation for enrollment of patients in a national study on axillary node dissection for breast cancer being performed under the auspices of the American College of Surgeons

**High-tech equipment, such as this linear accelerator, is housed at Martin Memorial Cancer Center**



Oncology Group (ACoSOG). With 14 research studies currently underway, Martin Memorial's Cancer Center exceeds the minimum standards of ACoS by enrolling approximately 9 percent of its patients into research protocols.

Martin Memorial is able to open investigator-initiated clinical trials thanks to its affiliation with the NCI-accredited H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. Cancer prevention studies and pharmaceutical company studies are also ongoing. Some of the research studies currently underway include:

- The Selenium & Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT) for healthy men age 55 or older with no history of prostate cancer
- A randomized phase II/III trial of paclitaxel plus carboplatin with or without bevacizumab in patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer

- A phase III double-blind, multi-center randomized study in pancreatic cancer patients comparing Virulizin® plus Gemzar® versus placebo and Gemzar.

The third floor of the cancer center completes a full range of oncology services with medical hematology-oncology physician practices and Martin Memorial's outpatient infusion suite. "Working with our private practicing oncologists as a team, our service line offers clinical expertise by OCN®-certified RNs and oncology pharmacy specialists for approximately 500-600 patient visits monthly," said Debbie Lewandowski, director of Oncology Services at the cancer center.

## Blueprint for Success

Martin Memorial places one highly experienced individual in charge of each area at the cancer center. One assistant administrator oversees both inpatient and outpatient oncology. A clinical director, radiation therapy director, research nurse, social worker, dietitian, pharmacist, tumor registrar, and case manager are all in charge of their area of expertise.

"We energize our staff to be creative in finding ways to improve our cancer care," said Lewandowski, noting that staff is encouraged to pursue continuing education and keep current on issues affecting the delivery of quality cancer care. The staff also keeps current on emerging technology such as cancer biotherapy, which its oncology nurses are currently learning.

A multidisciplinary team attends weekly cancer conferences to review and discuss interesting and difficult cases for diagnosis, staging, treatment, follow-up, and outcome. The Inpatient Oncology Team also meets weekly to plan and support cancer patients and their families from admission to discharge.

"Some of our strengths include using the Cancer Committee as our decision-making hub and following the American College of Surgeons (ACoS) standards, such as for the tumor board and staging issues," Lewandowski said. "We see a lot of cases for a small community hospital and have a committed team approach to treating all patients."

## Benchmarking to the Best

Alan S. Collin, M.D., chairman of the Cancer Program Committee at Martin Memorial, is proud of the Cancer Committee's determination "to be the best and guide a program that results in the highest quality of care to every patient. To achieve this goal, we identified benchmarks against which we measure our programs, activities, and outcomes." He added, "We measure well against national standards of excellence," including ACoS standards.

Not only do Martin Memorial's clinical studies of outcomes for cancer patients meet the standards derived from national benchmarking data, but its patients report high levels of satisfaction with the care they receive. Infusion patients' satisfaction level, for example, is ranked at 99 percent.

In the future, the cancer center plans to benchmark oncology patients' understanding of the numerous tests and treatments they need to undergo.

In addition, Lewandowski pointed out that the cancer center participates in an indigent drug program overseen by Pharmacy that allows the cancer center to provide free chemotherapy to indigent patients. The drug companies replenish the center's drug inventory at no charge. To date the facility has recovered over \$110,000 each year in oncology drug costs with the indigent drug program over the past three years, Lewandowski said.

Doreen Elston, R.Ph., Pharm.D., pharmacy clinical services manager, said, "Our drug replacement program benefits those in the county that can't afford care so we can do more to help our community."

Martin Memorial's cancer program does not rest on its laurels but strives to continuously improve. "We can point to achievements that rank us among the best, and indeed make us a benchmark for others," Collin said.

Solucient, an independent agency which grades clinical outcomes, efficiency of services, and financial performance for hospitals across the country, has named Martin Memorial one of the nation's top 100 hospitals for the third time. 📍