

Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center

Alexandria, Virginia

Community care—committed to patients; committed to excellence

Inova Alexandria Hospital is a 318-bed community hospital located in Northern Virginia, serving the City of Alexandria and surrounding communities in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. In March 2009, Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center received the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer's Outstanding Achievement Award—only 19 percent of programs surveyed were recognized with this award.

Established in 1989, the Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center offers patients and their families the best qualities of community-based care along with state-of-the-art treatment modalities and the depth of resources available as part of the multi-hospital Inova Health System. While the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area is home to several NCI-designated cancer centers, community-based cancer care continues to play a vital role in this densely populated region. With high-quality cancer care in their home communities, patients and families can choose care close to home. Nearby care eliminates the added stressors of a long commute to care and juggling often complex and costly logistics to access cutting-edge treatments.

"I think our cancer program is unique in the region in that we are a community hospital with real roots to the local community. We take care of patients from all walks of life from



Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center has offered treatment with the Trilogi® linear accelerator since 2006.

Vital Statistics

- Hospital bed size: 318
- Number of dedicated inpatient oncology beds: 21
- Number of new cases seen annually: 900

Selected Support Services:

- Pastoral care and spirituality support
- Lending Library
- Bonnet Boutique
- Patient navigation services
- Integrative care, including gentle exercise and yoga programs
- American Cancer Society programs
- Support groups for breast and prostate cancer.

Alexandria and beyond. We have the patient-centered attributes of a community hospital—friendly staff, easily accessible facility. At the same time, we have a cancer program of true excellence where patients can get the latest standard treatments," said Matthew Poggi, MD, medical director, Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center.

The Cancer Center offers a full continuum of cancer care services including surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and support services. Approximately 95 percent of care provided is on an outpatient basis. The Cancer Center sees about 900 new cancer patients each year. The leading cancer sites treated are lung, breast, prostate, colorectal, and head and neck.

The Cancer Center follows National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines. Patient cases are discussed in weekly cancer council and multidisciplinary team meetings. Tumor conferences and cancer committee meetings are coordinated by the program's Cancer Registry, which was established in 1980, and now follows 22,000 cases.

Leading the Way

The Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center was one of the first hospitals in the region to offer intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) and image-guided radiation therapy (IGRT) treatment with the Trilogi™ linear

accelerator, initiating treatment in 2006. Cancer sites currently treated with the Trilogy system include breast, lung, prostate, kidney, liver, and colon cancers. The Cancer Center is also a leader in providing radioactive seed implants to treat prostate cancer, having launched its program in 1995, and remains the largest prostate seed program in Northern Virginia, treating approximately 125 patients per year.

In addition to the Trilogy, the Cancer Center offers radiation therapy treatment with a Varian 21 EX linear accelerator. Among the radiotherapy services offered are high-dose-rate brachytherapy (HDR); stereotactic radiotherapy (SRS); stereotactic body radiotherapy (SBRT); IMRT; IGRT with megavoltage cone beam (MVCB); and partial breast irradiation therapy. An electronic medical record (EMR) meets the needs of staff and physicians and the department is filmless.

Services in One Location

The Cancer Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 5:00 pm. Valet parking is available to Cancer Center patients. A dedicated entrance opens into the Cancer Center's newly renovated waiting area. All of the Cancer Center's services are located conveniently on one floor. Facilities include a dedicated CT scanner; five exam rooms; a nursing station; two linear accelerators, the Varian Trilogy and a Varian 21 EX; an EMR; the cancer registry; a patient resource library; and a boutique. Newly diagnosed outpatients are scheduled within 24-48 hours of referral. New oncology inpatients are scheduled within 24 hours of referral.

The Cancer Center's multidisciplinary treatment team includes patient care navigators (1 FTE navigator dedicated to breast cancer patients), ONS-certified nurses, a dedicated oncology dietitian, social

workers, PhD medical physicists, dosimetrists, and radiation therapists. Cancer Center patients have access to national clinical trial protocols through the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG), ECOG, NSABP, and ACoSOG.

Since 2000, the Cancer Center has offered "Prostate School" for patients who will undergo radioactive seed implants. The school is held weekly on Wednesday mornings from approximately 8 am to 12 noon. Each session is attended by about 7 or 8 patients and their significant others. The program includes presentations by a social worker, dietitian, and nurses that cover what to expect pre-op, the day of the procedure, and post-op. Prostate School is provided free of charge to patients and their caregivers.

Support Services Tailored to Patients' Needs

Social services include individual and family psychosocial assessments, insurance pre-certifications, counseling, education and consultation, support groups, and discharge planning. All patients are referred to social workers for assessment.

The Cancer Center screens all outpatient oncology patients for nutrition risk using a nationally recognized oncology screening tool, the Patient Generated Assessment (PG-SGA). High- and moderate-risk patients are seen within one week and monitored throughout treatment. Nutrition classes are open to all Cancer Center patients and to the community.

Comprehensive rehabilitation services are available to cancer patients throughout the continuum of care. These include:

- *Cancer Recovery & Exercise*, an eight-week medically supervised exercise program for patients with cancer.
- TheraBite® Jaw Motion Rehabilitation System, designed to help increase jaw range of motion, strengthen weakened muscles, and mobilize joints for head and neck cancer patients.
- Lymphedema program.

Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center offers patients all the benefits of a close-to-home community hospital combined with the access

to the services available through the larger Inova Health System including the Inova Breast Care Institute (IBCI). The Inova Health System is striving for all hospitals to become accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). In December, Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center was notified that the program passed NAPBC certification. In October, during breast cancer awareness month, the Institute held a series of *Power of Pink* health events including a free screening mammogram day at multiple locations. The Inova Breast Care Institute is a member of the National Quality Measures for Breast Centers in Northern Virginia, an organization that monitors the quality of care delivered to breast cancer patients.

For patients with cancer and their families, the Life with Cancer® program offers a range of programs and services including support groups, individual and family educational meetings, and workshops.

Inova Alexandria Hospital Cancer Center helps provide patients with services not covered by insurance through the Inova Foundation's Cancer Care Fund. This program helps pay for transportation expenses, prescription drugs, and medical supplies. In addition, the Cancer Center has an indigent drug program for self-pay patients that helps acquire drugs from individual pharmaceutical companies at no charge. Each year, Inova Alexandria Hospital and the Alexandria Office on Women sponsor *The Walk*, a walk and run event to raise funds to provide free mammography and other diagnostic screening procedures for Alexandria women who are underinsured or uninsured.

Committed to providing the highest quality care, the Cancer Center at Inova Alexandria Hospital has received the Professional Research Consultants (PRC) 5-Star Award for 2008, based on patient scores rating the facility as "excellent" for "overall quality of care," and recognition by PRC in 2008 as Top Scoring Health-Care Facility, Outpatient Radiation Oncology Services Overall Quality of Care.

Future goals include pursuing Disease-Specific Care Certification by The Joint Commission. 🏆