



Scott & White Memorial Hospital and Clinic

Center for Cancer Prevention and Care Serving Central Texas for 100-Plus Years

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Serving Central Texas for 100-Plus Years

Scott & White Memorial Hospital records more than 1.3 million patient visits each year at the main site in Temple, Tex., and its 19 regional clinics. Scott & White has more than a 100-year history of quality care enhanced by education and research. "Our cancer services reflect the latest technology, most sophisticated programs, and the personalized care upon which our tradition and reputation are based," said Alfred B. Knight, M.D., president and CEO. Scott & White is the main teaching facility of The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center College of Medicine.

The American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer recently surveyed the cancer program at Scott & White and gave it a four-year approval. The commission especially commended the Center for Cancer Prevention and Care for its annual report and ongoing quality-of-life evaluation.

LARYNGEAL CANCER AND VOICE RESTORATION

A special area of interest at Scott & White includes laryngeal cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates that during 2000, 10,100 new cases of laryngeal cancer (8,100 in men and 2,000 in women) will be diagnosed. "While this patient population may not be large, the quality-of-life issue is *huge*," said Pandora Ashley, C.T.R., referring to the special communication needs of the laryngeal cancer patient.

In many cases of laryngeal cancer, treatment with radiation and chemotherapy can make organ preservation possible and thus avoid the need for voice restoration. At Scott & White, this non-surgical alternative has advanced over the past 15 years, and various

combination therapies continue to be studied for efficacy of treatment and long-term survival rates. Discussions with patients about choices of treatment include chemo-radiation as an option.

In many advanced cases, however, surgery with total laryngectomy is necessary. Of the 8 to 28 annual cases of laryngeal cancer seen since 1995 at Scott & White, only a few required total laryngectomy. The most devastating result of this surgery is loss of voice.

Scott & White's voice restoration program began in the early 1970s with the combined efforts of otolaryngologists and speech pathologists. As the variety of possible treatments multiplied in the early 1980s, it was evident that a multidisciplinary team specializing in otolaryngology, oncology, radiology, nursing, speech pathology, dentistry, and plastic surgery specialists was needed to coordinate patient assessment and treatment. Their order of involvement would flow from the medical doctor to the other specialists for both pre- and post-surgery. Today specialists also address issues of education regarding cancer survival, communication, hygiene, nutrition, and mental/spiritual health. Speech pathology treatment post-surgery encompasses both communication and eating.

The objective in voice restoration is to provide patients with a source of vibration or noise, and then teach them how to create speech. "Our philosophy is to use a combination of methods to give the laryngectomee a primary and a backup mode of communication," explained head and neck oncologist, D. Randall Pinkston, M.D., F.A.C.S. There are three methods of speech restoration. The most popular (60 percent) involves use of a handheld battery-powered electron-

ic buzzer. The second method, tracheo-esophageal puncture or TEP (30 percent), is increasing in popularity. It is the most sophisticated, requiring surgical creation of a permanent fistula with a one-way valve prosthesis worn in the fistula. The third method, used by 10 percent, is esophageal speech or "burp-talking."

The laryngectomee, speech pathologist, otolaryngologist, and nurse clinician decide which mode of restoration to use. The factors that determine the appropriate method are based on: the laryngectomee's communication needs, general health, post-surgical anatomy and physiology, cognitive abilities, fine motor abilities, support system, and motivation.

"Nowadays there is no excuse, unless the patient prefers it, for any laryngectomee to communicate exclusively in writing, or by... gesturing," according to Pinkston.

Before surgery, a staff member offers each patient the opportunity to receive a visit from at least one other person in his or her geographic area who has gone through the same type of procedure. Laryngectomee support groups are likely to be more active in metropolitan areas, where numbers of laryngectomees are greater than in rural areas. "Patients report that these relationships formed in support groups are of primary importance in their recovery," said Pinkston.

CLINICAL TRIALS AND GROWTH

As a member of the Southwest Oncology Group, the Scott & White Center for Cancer Prevention and Care offers oncology research opportunities in more than 100 protocols. In addition, Scott & White cooperates with pharmaceutical companies

in clinical trials. Research in cancer prevention trials at Scott & White included involvement in the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project.

Scott & White continues to

grow. Expansion plans include a cancer center to be developed in Kileen, Tex., 30 miles away.

"We plan services that will benefit our patients, and we will continue to grow in order to serve

the health care needs of central Texas....We are sincerely proud of our comprehensive cancer program," said Knight. ■

Scott & White is a health care system with three main components: a clinic with nearly 515 physicians and physician/scientists, a not-for-profit hospital, and a not-for-profit health plan. The main site is in Temple, Tex., and there are 19 regional clinics.

The Scott & White Health Plan currently covers 165,000 members under managed care in 35 counties covering a 27,000 square-mile area in central Texas.

For more information, contact the Scott & White Memorial Hospital and Clinic at 254-724-1053, or visit their web site at <http://www.sw.org>.

VITAL STATISTICS

- Total hospital bed size: 486
- Number of analytic patients per year: 1,527
- Dedicated oncology unit beds: 16
- Managed care penetration in the state: 19 percent

PATIENT SUPPORT SERVICES

All patient support programs use an upbeat approach that maintains confidentiality. Several programs are also available in Spanish. The Scott & White Options for Health Education Center offers health information, training, and education to patients, their families, and visitors. The center also offers:

- Psychosocial support through a number of groups for laryngectomy, breast cancer, prostate cancer, and ostomy patients, and a bereavement program called Life after Loss.
- A Reach to Recovery program where volunteers visit patients before and after surgery and provide transportation to and from cancer-related treatment.
- A Guestroom Program in which temporary housing is available for outpatients.
- A Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Holiday Project, which subsidizes medical camps by creating and selling cards, shirts, and mugs.

