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## RO-ILS Radiation Therapist 2023 Great Catch

A course of radiation therapy may last anywhere between one day and seven weeks and the patient interacts with the radiation therapists during every single treatment. Therapists often build a rapport with the patient and create an environment that encourages open dialogue, leading to improved quality and safety. For example, a patient may mention a side effect they are experiencing to their therapist who can then notify the nurse or radiation oncologist, so the patient receives support in between on-treatment visits with the physician. In this way, the therapists serve as an important conduit between the patient and the radiation oncology team. With their many responsibilities, radiation therapists play a key patient-facing role in communicating and interacting with patients.

The following RO-ILS event describes how a conversation between attentive radiation therapists and the patient can result in a revised treatment plan and improved cancer care.

- Two radiation therapists were performing a clinical electron setup for the boost on a patient with breast cancer.
- During the electron setup, the therapists spoke with the patient regarding the multiple scars that were present at the site.
- The patient reported to the therapists that they had undergone multiple surgeries in the same area, and they wondered if a boost to the other excision cavity was needed.
- The therapists paused the setup and confirmed with the dosimetrist that the plan and setup were to the correct location.
- The patient was treated correctly on day one of the boost to *one* of the excision cavities.
- The case was brought to the physician's attention, the pathology was reviewed and it was decided that *both* cavities warranted a boost.

**GREAT CATCH THERAPISTS!**

This near miss event highlights some important takeaways:

1. The therapists exhibited a high degree of emotional intelligence during their conversation with the patient, creating a sense of security in addressing their concerns.
2. The therapists took the time to pause the setup and confirm they were implementing the plan correctly with dosimetry.
3. This case highlights the practice's culture of safety where the staff felt empowered to bring the case to the attention of the physician.

### **SAFETY CHECK**

**Does the safety culture in your workplace promote this level of mindfulness even in time-sensitive situations? Would this type of delay be deemed worthy?**

Every November, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) organizes [National Radiologic Technology Week](#) to acknowledge and celebrate the important contributions of medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals. The 2023 theme is "Patients are our passion; safety is our priority." This RO-ILS great catch event perfectly exemplifies how therapists' passion for patient care and prioritization of safety leads to the best, high quality care for patients with cancer. Radiation therapists are critical to the execution and planning of safe radiation treatment and play a vital role on the radiation oncology team. RO-ILS thanks all radiation therapists for their contributions to patient safety.

**ASRT is a proud supporter of the RO-ILS program.** Together, the sponsors and supporters enable U.S.-based practices to participate in the RO-ILS program for free, allowing shared learning and quality improvement. RO-ILS thanks ASRT for their generous contribution to RO-ILS and the field.