

Icon Oncology announce good news for Free State cancer patients

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New state-of-the-art machine means more patients can access cancer treatment



There is good news for cancer patients in the Free State who need access to advanced treatment technology. The installation of a brand-new linear accelerator (linac) at the [Icon Oncology](#) radiation therapy unit in Bloemfontein, means that more patients can now receive life-saving treatment.

The official commissioning of the machine was recently celebrated and attended by a group of top Bloemfontein oncologists. The new machine will enable these experts to treat more patients using leading-edge technology at

the Nelson Mandela Drive Oncology unit.

The burden of cancer in South Africa is on the rise. Experts predict that by 2030, the number of new cancer cases in sub-Saharan Africa, will be 85% higher compared to 2008. This places an enormous burden on our healthcare system and Icon Oncology is tackling this head-on.



Icon Oncology is the leading provider of radiation and managed care oncology services in the country, providing equipment and expertise in areas where its most needed. The installation of the multi-million-rand [Varian Halcyon™ Linac](#), means that more patients can now access cancer treatment in the province.

“We are committed to widening the access to quality cancer care through our ongoing investment in technology. Replacing older machines with the latest technology means we can care for more patients without compromising on the quality of care they receive”, says Anthony Pedersen, CEO of Icon Oncology.

According to Dr Sandra Bonnet, a radiation oncologist and member of the Icon Network, one of the biggest benefits of the

Halcyon™ Linac over the equipment it replaces, is that treatment times on the machine is shorter. This allows for a higher volume of patients that can be accommodated.

“Breast cancer in women and prostate cancer in men are the most common cancers in South Africa and radiotherapy plays a pivotal role in the treatment of these diseases. Currently, the waiting time to start treatment from application is two weeks. With the up-to-date technology, high quality and faster treatments with the Varian Halcyon we can even improve on that. We are thus privileged and thankful to be of even better service in the community,” says Dr Bonnet.

The Halcyon™ radiotherapy system is engineered to deliver, volumetric modulated radiation therapy (VMAT) technology, intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT), image-guided radiotherapy (IGRT) and RapidArc™ radiotherapy.

“The biggest benefit of the machine is that it delivers a precise, tightly focused radiation dose to the shape of the tumour, while minimizing the impact on surrounding healthy tissue. The treatment time is fast and the machine has brushless motors for silent movements, which will contribute to a positive patient experience. This new machine is a great asset to our city and will assist us as oncologists to provide quality care to our cancer patients in a beautiful setting,” explains Dr Corlia Loots a radiation oncologist who attended the official commissioning.

The Linac arrived in September this year and was installed by a team of experts. The Halcyon™ linac was installed at the Icon Oncology unit, which is in the heart of Bloemfontein. The first patient received treatment on Wednesday, 17 November and the oncology unit can now treat between 40 and 50 patients per day.

“We are excited to extend this capacity to also improve public access to this kind of cancer treatment. Icon Oncology and our network of 150-strong oncologist have pioneered the way patients should receive cancer care in South Africa. Decades of clinical and managed healthcare experience means that we can offer cost-effective, quality treatment to both insured and uninsured patients. This makes us the ideal partner for public private partnerships and is testament to our purpose to give cancer patients the best opportunity to lead healthier lives,” says Pedersen.

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Icon Oncology is a national network of oncology specialists who has pioneered the move to value-based care and are committed to increasing the access to quality cancer care in Southern Africa.

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