Medical Physicist Value Proposition for Today and for the Future

Don McNary, MBA, Vice President
Allegheny Health Network Cancer Institute, Pittsburgh, PA

Radiation Oncology......14 Sites of Service
Medical Oncology.......20 Sites of Service
Cellular Therapy.........1 Site of Service

AHN spans nine (9) counties in Western Pennsylvania and two other states

Medical Physicist Value Proposition for Today and the Future

• Present Value
• Value From an Administrator
• Message
• How to Communicate the Message
**Medical Physicist Value Proposition for Today and the Future**

**Value of Today:** Results from an internal survey of Physicists, Therapists and Physicians

- Physicists are always available for therapist questions and provide solutions for working through treatment issues.
- Physicists are one of the reasons our department can move forward with technology.
- Physicists maintain QA/QC programs to keep radiation treatment safe and of high quality.
- Physicists maintain compliance with all state and national regulations.
- Physicists are scientific experts who understand the treatment process as well as an educator for the entire staff. Possess the ability to match the correct processes and technologies to meet the physician plan patient treatment.
- Physicists have the knowledge and understanding to assist administrators in dealing with vendors and more importantly, can set the capitalization course for Radiation Oncology.
- Physicists offer the ability to implement advanced technologies and research activities.

**Value of Future (Administrator’s Point of View)**

- Physicists need to have a major role in selection of all technology that has the best systematic approach.
- Physicists must create options to extend the life of the accelerators and all equipment, must optimize equipment utilization.
- Continue to match correct technology to physician plan and optimize treatment plan to minimize the side effects.
- Physicists and Physician must work in a collaborative relationship to balance complex treatment plans with the practical throughput on the accelerator.
- Physicists must also be considered as a Risk Avoidance Insurance policy. Price of wrong or errors in treatment, wrong calibration, faulty equipment can be a multi-million dollar expenditure.
- Administrators are swayed by $$. Physicians are swayed by sexy stuff. Physicists must remain objective with vendors. They must increase the expectation of the vendors service and test all utilization of the New Technology. Vendor is not always right. Trust but verify.
- The Physicist, Administrator and Physician must include team approach in selection of capital and include ancillary groups such as System IT to assure there are no limitations on utilization and accessibility.

**Message**

- While revenue margins are shrinking, Physics areas can not be sacrificed for the following reasons:
  - Risk Avoidance Insurance of Quality and Safety.
  - Maximum utilization of current equipment, which may have an extended life.
  - Effective capitalization planning and full utilization selecting equipment to meet all needs. Remember IT.
  - Directs the best technology, planning and treatment to meet the physician plan for advanced patient care.
  - Reimbursement will not grow at the same rate as past. Fee for service will change. This represents an opportunity for Physicists to expand quality of outcomes. This could be a real future of medical physicists.
How to Communicate the Message

• Physicist and Physician must be present at least quarterly at the upper management level meetings along with the Department Administrator

• Create Additional Awareness
  • Physicists also play a leading role in quality, perhaps representing the department in Institutional Quality meetings which continue to demonstrate value to Institutions. They should also be present at management meetings to present Advancement of Technology, etc. The goal is to create awareness of the significant role of the physicist, while advancing the state of the art of Radiation Oncology

• All capital meetings with department and Sr. Management must include the physicist, administrator and physician (proper representation of the department)

• Once the direction is decided internally through collaborative discussion, all leaders must operate on the same plan