

Cancer centre of excellence for Eastern Cape patients

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Increased capacity allows for better access to lifesaving treatment.



Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape now has some of the most state-of-the-art radiation oncology technology in South Africa. This follows the recent installation of a Varian Halcyon linear accelerator (linac) at the Langenhoven Oncology Centre.

Speaking at the recent commissioning event held at the unit Dr Ernst Marais, COO of Icon Oncology, highlighted the urgent need for treatment capacity across the country: “Cancer is a rising crisis for South Africa, and according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), an estimated 1.1 million new cancer cases are being reported in Africa each year. Sadly, there are around 700,000 cancer deaths on the continent each year, many of which could be avoided with early detection and better access to treatment,” explains Marais.

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– Simon Meredith, general manager and country lead for Varian

The new machine allows high volumes of patients to receive fast and very accurate treatment. It was installed to complement the existing Varian Truebeam linac which amongst other things, are used to treat brain tumours requiring a very high level of accuracy. The combined capacity of the two machines means that the Icon Radiation Therapy team can now treat up to 80 patients a day.

“This is the first implementation of combined Varian Halcyon and Varian Truebeam technology in the Eastern Cape. Working in parallel, the combination of the Varian Halcyon and Truebeam technology allows oncologists a wide choice of treatment options. Importantly this means that patients who previously had to wait or travel for specialist care can now receive life saving treatment in their own province,” explains Simon Meredith, general manager and country lead for Varian, a Siemens Healthineers company.



According to Dr John Crockett, a medical and radiation oncologist practicing at the Langenhoven Oncology Centre, the multi-million rand technology investment at the unit ensures sophisticated functionality and the most advanced treatment capabilities in the world.

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.

“From a clinical perspective the biggest benefit of the Halcyon machine is that it delivers a precise, tightly focused radiation dose to 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 improves the patient’s experience during treatment,” explains Dr Crockett.

“Icon Oncology and our extensive network of oncologists, has revolutionised the approach to cancer care in South Africa. With decades of expertise in clinical and managed healthcare, we have successfully pioneered a model that provides high-quality, affordable treatment to both insured and uninsured patients. This positions us as the perfect partner for local and national government and reaffirms our commitment to provide cancer patients with the best chance to live healthier lives,” concludes Marais.

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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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