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## **Researchers at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Aim to Improve Accuracy and Reduce Radiation Time in Patients with Breast Cancer**

*New Study to Weigh Improvement of Radiation Delivered to Part of the Breast*

**New Brunswick, N.J., September 24, 2008** – According to the American Cancer Society, 40,000 breast cancer deaths are expected nationwide this year, with 1,400 here in New Jersey. It is those statistics investigators at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) hope to curb with research they're conducting on whether partial breast radiation following a lumpectomy will hold a better benefit than radiation of the whole breast. CINJ is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

In patients who are diagnosed with early stage breast cancer and have their cancerous lump and surrounding tissue removed from the breast, the standard of care is to deliver radiation to the whole breast to eliminate areas of cancer not removed through surgery. Following lumpectomy and radiation to the whole breast, study has shown that the majority of relapses occur close to the tumor bed.

This study aims to use a treatment known as **Accelerated Partial Breast Irradiation (APBI)**, in which patients receive radiation to only a portion of their breast, over a three-week period versus the traditional six or seven. Selected patients will enroll in this trial prior to having the lumpectomy. During the surgery, after the cancerous lump is removed, four to six gold markers will be implanted in the surgical area. These markers will aid in determining if the accuracy of radiation treatments may be improved using state-of-art technology such as image-guided techniques. It is after the surgery that patients will begin the shortened course of radiation.

Bruce G. Haffty, M.D., chair of radiation oncology at CINJ and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and Sharad Goyal, M.D., instructor of radiation oncology at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, are the lead investigators for the study. Dr. Haffty -- who also is a professor and chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School -- notes the findings could result in an improved quality of life for patients, "When radiation time is cut in half, there is a better opportunity to preserve healthy tissue surrounding the breast. And the use of the gold markers versus other conductors commonly used, will better aid technicians in directing the radiation to precisely where it needs to go; therefore, we would hopefully see fewer relapses."

Women aged 45 or older with the diagnosis of early stage breast cancer (with tumors measuring three centimeters or less) are eligible to take part in the trial, although other criteria must be met. For more information on how to take part, individuals should call CINJ's Office of Human Research Services at 732-235-8675.

Clinical trials, often called cancer research studies, test new treatments and new ways of using existing treatments for cancer. At CINJ, researchers use these studies to answer questions about how a treatment affects the human body and to make sure it is safe and effective. There are several types of clinical trials that are currently underway at CINJ, including those that diagnose, treat, prevent, and manage symptoms of cancer. Many treatments used today – whether it is drugs or vaccines; ways to do surgery or give radiation therapy; or combinations of treatments -- are the results of past clinical trials.

As New Jersey's only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, CINJ provides patients with access to treatment options not available at other institutions within the state. CINJ currently enrolls more than 1,000 patients on clinical trials, including approximately 15% of all new adult cancer patients and approximately 70% of all pediatric cancer patients. Enrollment in clinical trials nationwide is fewer than 5% of all adult cancer patients.

### **About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey**

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. To support CINJ, please call the Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation at 1-888-333-CINJ.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Partner Hospital: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital\*, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Morristown Memorial Hospital, Overlook Hospital, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ-Hamilton), Saint Peter's University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School\*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. \*Academic Affiliate

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