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**MONTEFIORE PHYSICIANS ARE ON NATIONAL PANEL THAT PUBLISHES
FIRST-EVER GUIDELINES
FOR RE-IRRADIATION OF HEAD AND NECK CANCERS**

*Re-irradiation is the “Only Potential Curative Treatment”
for Recurrent Tumors, Panel Says*

New York City, NY (September 28, 2011) – A panel of oncologists, including Montefiore physicians, have for the first time created clinical guidelines for the retreatment of recurrent head and neck cancer. The guidelines, or “appropriateness criteria,” were established by a panel of the nation’s most respected head and neck cancer specialists, and published in the August, 2011 issue of the *International Journal of Radiation Oncology Biology Physics*. The panel was appointed by the American College of Radiology.

The new guidelines recommend careful evaluation of patients at a tertiary-care hospital with head and neck cancer specialists before retreatment, suggest a specific range of doses for "re-irradiation" (a second round of radiation therapy when head and neck cancer recurs), and discuss when surgery, re-irradiation and/or chemotherapy are best suited for retreatment.

Approximately 3-5 percent of all cancers in the United States are head and neck cancers, according to the National Institutes of Health. In many of these patients, who are first treated with traditional surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy, the cancer can recur or secondary tumors can arise within previously irradiated tissues. The guidelines are intended to improve care to these patients.

“This is an important document because it is the first set of clinical guidelines for potentially curative treatment of patients who have regrowth of head and neck cancers. It provides a consensus on how patients should be managed,” said Madhur Kumar Garg, MD in the Department of Radiation Oncology at Montefiore Medical Center, which performs more than a

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dozen re-irradiation procedures each year (these are patients referred to Montefiore for this highly specialized treatment by other hospitals in the Bronx, Manhattan and Long Island).

Dr. Garg and his colleague Richard V. Smith, MD, are co-authors of the report and members of the multidisciplinary head and neck team at the Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care.

The report states:

- Retreatment is justified because trial studies have shown that local treatment improves overall survival;
- Of the “significant proportion” of head and neck cancer patients with recurrent disease who cannot be operated on, re-irradiation is the “only potential curative treatment.” Palliative chemotherapy has been the standard of care, but results are rarely durable;
- Optimal results are attained with administration of at least 50 to 60 Gy of re-irradiation (Gy is the standard unit of measure of radiation absorbed by the patient). This is a high dosage, so the panel recommends treatment in a tertiary care center, where specialists can balance the effectiveness of re-irradiation treatment with toxicity;
- Patients need “careful restaging evaluation,” preferably by a tertiary care center, before radical surgery or aggressive re-irradiation;
- If the tumor is resectable, surgery is the standard of care “and may provide long-term disease control in 25 to 45 percent of patients”; and
- Both local control and disease-free survival are improved in patients receiving postoperative re-irradiation and chemotherapy.

Montefiore Medical Center

As the University Hospital for Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Montefiore is a premier academic medical center nationally renowned for its clinical excellence, scientific discovery and commitment to its community. Recognized among the top hospitals nationally and ranked sixth out of 180 in the New York metropolitan area by *U.S. News & World Report*, Montefiore provides compassionate, patient- and family-centered care and educates the healthcare professionals of tomorrow. The Children’s Hospital at Montefiore is consistently named in *U.S. News*’ “America’s Best Children’s Hospitals,” and is second among those in the New York metro area. With four hospitals, 1,491 beds and 93,000 annual hospital discharges, Montefiore is an integrated health system seamlessly linked by advanced

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technology. State-of-the-art primary and specialty care is provided through a network of nearly 100 locations across the region, including the largest school health program in the nation and a home health program. Montefiore derives its inspiration for excellence from its patients and community, and continues to be on the frontlines of developing innovative approaches to care.

For more information please visit www.montefiore.org and www.montekids.org.

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