



**UNC**  
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Pardee

# Cancer Annual Report 2024

Pardee Cancer Center combines high quality care with innovation to provide cancer treatment that is uniquely tailored to your needs.

As the only comprehensive cancer center in Henderson County, our team of caring physicians, nurses, navigators, and staff helps you understand your diagnosis, your treatment options and the entire process in between. We have earned national accreditations from these prestigious organizations:



A QUALITY PROGRAM  
of the AMERICAN COLLEGE  
OF SURGEONS



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## ON THE COVER:

### *Dr. Navin Anthony, Physician of the Year*

We are thrilled to feature Navin Anthony, MD, board-certified oncologist at Pardee Cancer Center, who was recognized as UNC Health Pardee's Physician of the Year. Nominated by and voted on by his peers, Dr. Anthony's dedication and commitment to patient care are truly inspiring.

# Chairman's REPORT

JOHN K. HILL, MD

As I reflect on my 21 years practicing hematology and oncology in Hendersonville, it is quite amazing to me how significantly things have changed over that course of time. I remember joining this small, community practice nestled in Laurel Park. Now each day I come into a bustling office within a regional comprehensive cancer center. Pardee Cancer Center has become a destination of choice for many patients in the entire region of western North Carolina and upstate South Carolina. As our community's population continues to age and we see an influx of retirees from other areas of the country, Pardee's cancer program will certainly continue to grow over the coming years.

With that growth comes challenges, but also opportunities. For calendar year 2023, over 840 new cancer cases were diagnosed and/or treated at Pardee, an all-time high for us. With continued growth, growing pains can certainly be expected. We have faced many challenges related to staffing and space issues. After months of aggressive recruitment, we have added several clinical and support staff members to our team, including a new nurse practitioner, Jessica Gasperson-Shuford, MSN,



APRN, FNP-C, which allows us to offer more real time, acute care visits for patients who may be having difficulties with treatment. Another significant addition to Pardee's team has been Dr. Coen Klos, a fellowship-trained colorectal surgeon.

*"I am proud to be part of the administrative team that is leading Pardee Cancer Center into the future."*

Our entire team at Pardee Cancer Center is made up of compassionate, highly qualified professionals who are deeply committed to patient care and devoted to our community. As our patient population grows, we are confident that, in the next 10 to 20 years, we will be amazed by how our program continues to evolve. I am proud to be part of the administrative team leading Pardee Cancer Center into the future, advancing cancer treatment through cutting-edge technology and expanding access to critical clinical trials for our patients. ■

# Leadership Directory

Pardee Cancer Center has a diverse group of leaders who bring a wide array of education, experience, and expertise for Pardee to offer the best comprehensive cancer care in Western North Carolina. It is important to us that our patients and community members know our leaders, as we are committed to serving Henderson and surrounding counties. We are excited to present this annual report for 2024.

## DIVISION LEADERSHIP

**Brian Leutner, MBA** – Vice President, Clinical Services

**Adam Wilkins, DBA, MBA** – Administrative Director, Oncology Services

**Kristy Capps, BSN, RN** – Director, Clinical Operations, Oncology, and Infusion Services

**Hilda Connor** – Operations Manager, Oncology Services

## PHYSICIAN LEADERSHIP

**John Hill, MD** – Medical Director, Hematology Oncology and Clinical Research

**S. Yaseen Zia, MD** – Medical Director, Radiation Oncology

**Jennifer McAlister, MD** – Medical Director, Breast Surgery

## DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

**Tom Dellinger, DABR, PE** – Chief Medical Physicist

**Nycki Reeves, RTT** – Chief Radiation Therapist

**Renee Barnett, RN** – Clinical Coordinator, Infusion Therapy

**Candace Redden, RN** – Clinical Coordinator, Medical Oncology

**Carol Brown, AS, ODS-C** – Cancer Program Coordinator

**Robyn Bryson, PharmD** – Manager, Infusion Pharmacy and Clinical Research

**Michelle Dover, RT(R)(M)** – Breast Imaging Supervisor

**Kim Henderson, RN** – Clinical Coordinator, Ambulatory Infusions (AMP)

## MEET

# Adam Wilkins

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR, ONCOLOGY SERVICES

Pardee Cancer Center is pleased to introduce Adam Wilkins, DBA, MBA, Administrative Director of Oncology Services, who joined the team in April 2024.



Adam's connection to cancer is deeply personal. At age 16, he lost his grandmother to Stage IV lung cancer when she was only 58 years old. From diagnosis to her passing, his family had only 12 short weeks with her. That experience sparked a passion for Adam to make a difference in oncology. While he may not have known the exact path back then, he says, "I knew I wanted to prevent other families from experiencing the same loss. To me, each patient is someone's loved one, not just a number."

*"Leading this team and serving our community and patients through their cancer journeys is one of the greatest honors of my life."*

Prior to joining Pardee, Adam worked for nine years with Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System's Gibbs Cancer Center and Research Institute, where he served in an oncology leadership role for over seven years at the same cancer center where his grandmother fought her battle with cancer. He graduated from Lander University with a bachelor's degree in business administration and healthcare management, earned his Master's in business administration from Anderson University, and completed his Doctorate in Business Administration at Gardner-Webb University. His doctoral research focused on better understanding leadership practice, particularly the use of emotional intelligence between different groups of employees in a hospital setting. Adam has also served as an adjunct professor for Ottawa University, Converse University, and Gardner-Webb University.

Pardee Cancer Center's patient-centered approach aligns closely with Adam's values for compassionate care. He says, "Leading this team and serving our community and patients through their cancer journeys is one of the greatest honors of my life. He notes, "thank you for trusting this team with your care as we walk this journey with you and your loved ones."

When he's not working, Adam and his fiancé enjoy caring for cows, sheep, goats, ducks, chickens, and other animals on the 15-acre farm they own in upstate South Carolina. ■

# What is oncology support?

Oncology support services at Pardee Cancer Center focuses on the care path of each cancer patient, removing barriers to care and ensuring a smooth continuum of care for every patient, no matter the level of need. This team of highly skilled professionals offers a full spectrum of care and support to patients and their families which includes care navigation, social work, care coordination, financial navigation, and triage nursing.

This team is dedicated to serving in many complex roles for patients during their treatment journey, including connecting them to community resources, financial and billing concerns, transportation challenges, social issues such as housing or food instability, issues surrounding referrals for other services or imaging, and counseling for patients who may experience distress during their cancer treatment journey.

These services began at Pardee in 2008 with a single nurse navigator. Today, this team consists of two nurse navigators, one oncology clinical social worker, one clinical care coordinator, one triage nurse, and one financial navigator. Our commitment to patients is that these service offerings will continue to grow to meet the needs of our patients and community.



**Leann Noakes, BSN, RN, OCN**  
General Cancer Nurse Navigator

*"I chose oncology nursing because it allows me to be a glimmer of hope during some of the most challenging moments in patients' lives. Providing compassionate care, support, and education while advocating for patients and their families inspires me every day."*



**Wendy Wilkie**  
Financial Navigator

*"I work closely with the patients and their families to help them get financial assistance if they are uninsured or under-insured. I also help with billing concerns, insurance questions, run estimates for upcoming procedures and any other needs. I chose to work in oncology after my own journey with breast cancer. It is very rewarding if I can help someone not have financial stress or worry and they can concentrate on healing instead."*



**Marche' Tucker, BSN, RN**  
Breast Care Nurse Navigator

*"With over 30 years in critical care nursing, my own breast cancer diagnosis in 2016 revealed a new purpose. Now I dedicate myself to guiding and motivating breast cancer patients through their journey. My goal as a navigator is to offer unwavering support and empowerment every step of the way."*



**Christie Manning,**  
OSW-C, LCSW MSW, MBA  
Oncology Clinical Social Worker

*"I value taking care of the whole person. Cancer does not discriminate; it affects each person differently. Many aspects of a person's life contribute to their cancer experience, such as ethnicity, spirituality, and family situation. I enjoy working with patients and caregivers to navigate the healthcare system by helping them understand the new roles and responsibilities of going through treatment, providing couples therapy, being a liaison between the person with cancer and the medical team, accessing community and financial resources, providing support groups and individual therapy, and planning advance care."*



**Michelle Jones, BSN, RN, CCM**  
Oncology Clinical Care Coordinator

*"I believe that oncology nursing chose me before I chose it. Nine years ago, my mother lost her battle with cancer. I remember her saying she had a care team that always guided her in the right direction. She said these were 'her nurses.' I chose oncology because I wanted to make a positive impact on the lives of my patients and their families, but it's the impact they have on my life that truly reinforces that I am exactly where I need to be."*

# The Rising Tide of Cancer in Young Adults

As cancer continues to pose significant challenges across all age groups, recent trends highlight a concerning rise in cancer diagnoses among young adults. You may be familiar with the shocking death of the beloved Chadwick Boseman, who portrayed Black Panther in the Marvel movies. At only 43, Boseman passed away in 2020 following a four-year battle with colon cancer. More recently, Kate Middleton, the Princess of Wales, 42, revealed she has been battling cancer and just finished chemotherapy treatment. These are just two examples of young people, who are typically characterized by their vitality and health, increasingly facing the reality of cancer at a pivotal stage in life.

This trend is not limited to just the stars and royalty but is something we are seeing in our community. Understanding the unique risk factors, lifestyle influences, and genetic predispositions is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. The dedicated medical team at Pardee Cancer Center is committed to addressing these challenges head-on, empowering young adults with the knowledge and resources they need to reduce risk and foster a happier and healthier future.

## Cancer Trends in Western North Carolina

A recent study found that by 2030, the number of these types of early-onset cancer diagnoses could increase by almost 30 percent worldwide, with the number of people who might die from these diseases potentially increasing by nearly 20 percent.

At Pardee Cancer Center, from 2013 to 2023, we have seen a steady five percent rise each year in new cancer patients aged 18 to 45. Even more recently, we've begun to see elevated numbers of people in their 20s being diagnosed with cancer with the most prevalent types including colorectal, breast, pancreatic, and gynecological cancers.

Unfortunately, there is still a lot of unknown as to what is causing these trends. While researchers are still

studying what may be leading to this increase in cancer rates among young adults, it's likely a multifaceted issue influenced by factors such as genetic predispositions, environmental exposures, lifestyle choices, and delayed diagnoses. We are seeing a lot of cases happening sporadically, as opposed to being caused by any specific genetic syndrome.

## What Can You Do?

Education is key. Recent studies suggest that a significant portion of cancers could be prevented by healthier lifestyle choices including maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, and a well-balanced meal plan that focuses more on fresh fruits, vegetables, locally sourced food, whole grains, less animal fat, and less animal protein. This would also include limiting alcohol intake – meaning no more than two drinks a day for men and one for women. It's also recommended to avoid ultraviolet radiation and minimize exposure to pollutants.

Another key element of protecting yourself from developing early-onset cancer is staying up to date on your annual exams and vaccinations – including HPV, which protects against most cases of cervical cancer. It also protects against mouth, throat, head and neck cancers caused by HPV.

It's equally as important to know your body and pay attention to any changes you notice. The later the cancer is detected, the harder it can be to treat. Don't ignore your body – even if it's something small. If you're experiencing something unusual or if it's a change that goes on for a long time, it is worth talking to your doctor about.

## The Importance of Screenings

Screenings are critical because they help detect cancer in its earliest stages, making it easier to treat, and leading to better outcomes. And while younger patients are typically not meeting the threshold for routine cancer screenings –



for instance, mammography screenings usually begin at 40 and colonoscopies at 45 – if they are getting routine checkups and physicals with a primary care provider and paying attention to issues in their body, when something does arise, they're prepared.

## A Continuum of Care

At Pardee, we understand that it can be difficult and stressful to navigate the healthcare system. That's why we've taken several steps to bolster our resources for our community and strengthen the continuum of care for our patients. We have expanded our primary care network to serve more people by becoming a federally qualified healthcare center, Pardee BlueMD, to provide care for everyone, regardless of income. Additionally, we've added new providers and broadened our reach to respond to emerging needs in neighboring counties.

If a concern you have addressed with your primary care provider turns out to be something that needs advanced care, we can seamlessly connect you with any Pardee specialist, including a member of our oncology team. When you are part of the Pardee continuum of care, there is no need to travel a great distance or find a new healthcare home. With Pardee, you have access to a comprehensive care team who are committed to ensuring you have the best possible outcome. ■

# The Importance of Cancer Screenings

Screenings are essential for early cancer detection and can significantly increase the chances of successful treatment. Although screenings can be intimidating, they save lives. Pardee Cancer Center is committed to supporting our community through annual screenings, education, and prevention events.

These screenings provide peace of mind and are an important step toward maintaining health. Knowing which screenings you qualify for is a critical first step:

## MAMMOGRAM

For breast cancer detection, Pardee offers 3D mammograms for individuals aged 40 and older who are asymptomatic. While not required, annual screenings are recommended.

## LOW DOSE CT SCAN

Pardee provides Low Dose CT lung cancer screenings for adults aged 50 to 77 who have a smoking history of at least 20 pack-years. A good resource for calculating this is the website [SmokingPackYears.com](http://SmokingPackYears.com). Eligible individuals must be current smokers or have quit within the last 15 years and are asymptomatic. An annual screening is advised.

## COLONOSCOPY

Traditional colorectal screenings are available for people aged 45 and up with an average risk. Asymptomatic patients may also ask about the non-invasive Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT). Based on your age and individual risk factors, a screening frequency will be determined by your provider.

## PROSTATE SCREENING

Prostate screenings are offered for men aged 55 and older with average risk. These screenings may include lab work, such as the Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test or a digital rectal exam. Screenings every 12 to 24 months are generally recommended.



## MEET OUR NEW COLORECTAL SURGEON

# Coen Klos, MD

UNC Health Pardee is pleased to have board-certified general and colorectal surgeon, Dr. Coen Klos, join its surgical team in 2024. Dr. Klos shared his insights into his specialty, his inspiration, and his role on the team.

### What is the role of a colorectal surgeon in treating colorectal cancer?

The treatment of colorectal cancer requires a team approach. Gastroenterologists often perform colonoscopies to prevent or detect disease, and radiologists and pathologists work together to stage the cancer. Depending on the stage, some require a combination of chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery to either get control of the disease for a long period or preferably cure the cancer altogether.

Within the team it is the colorectal surgeon's responsibility to stay informed about the most recent standard of care regarding all these treatment components, as well as ongoing developments in the form of clinical trials, to recommend and execute the best surgical treatment plan.

### How does early intervention by a colorectal surgeon impact a patient's outcome?

In some cases, this can make the difference between a permanent ostomy versus anal sphincter muscle preservation with the ability to restore normal anatomy. In very selective cases this strategy may even result in complete regression of the tumor, allowing for "organ sparing" treatment, where surgery is reserved only for those tumors that grow back during close surveillance.

### What advancements in colorectal surgery have you applied in recent years?

Most colorectal surgeons have been able to perform a large share of their cases by a minimally invasive approach. However, in recent years, colorectal surgeons have started to perform minimally invasive surgery using surgical robots.

UNC Health Pardee now offers robotic surgery to its patients using the da Vinci® surgical system for colorectal surgery and urologic surgery, including prostate, kidney, and bladder procedures.

The most exciting advances are not so much the surgical procedures, but more so to the available treatments before and after surgery. For example, by studying aspects of the genetic profile of colon cancers, in some cases, we may be able to use immunotherapy to control and sometimes shrink tumors that look initially difficult to remove with a surgical procedure. We have also been able to determine that for rectal cancers it can be more beneficial to plan and give any indicated chemotherapy and radiation therapy before surgery takes place.

### What led you to pursue colorectal surgery?

During medical school at the University of Amsterdam, I was captivated by diseases of the gastrointestinal tract. At the same time, I enjoyed being in the operating room because it is a place where a team gets to work closely together and is allowed to truly devote all its attention to one goal: a successful operation for the single most important person in the room – the patient. These two interests led me to complete and publish several research projects in colorectal surgery.

Incidentally, during this time my mother was diagnosed with rectal cancer at a relatively young age. After undergoing chemoradiation therapy and surgery she is now a rectal cancer survivor. All these experiences solidified my goal to become a colorectal surgeon.

### Why did you choose Pardee?

I am happy to offer my services to the community at Pardee. This opportunity brings my wife back to the area where she grew up and will allow my kids to spend more time with their grandparents.

My role at Pardee within the surgery department improves the treatment process for those who need colorectal surgery services. Think of colon and rectal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, complicated diverticulitis, and pelvic floor disorders, for example. Collaboration between a multidisciplinary team of primary care physicians, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, gastroenterologists, radiologists, pathologists, hospitalists, pharmacists, and now the colon and rectal surgeon can all occur seamlessly at Pardee.

Learn more about Dr. Coen Klos and the Pardee Surgical Associates team at [pardeehospital.org](https://pardeehospital.org). ■

# CANCER SCREENING OUTREACH IN OUR COMMUNITIES

CAROL BROWN

Not only does Pardee offer regular screenings such as mammography, low dose CT scans, and colonoscopies, but we are also pleased to offer several community screenings, cancer prevention education, and early detection activities.

## Lung Cancer Screening Technology

One of the newer screening methods for lung cancer is the low dose CT scan (LDCT). Pardee continues to see an increase in the number of low dose CT scans each year. In calendar year 2023 Pardee administered 1,259 low dose CT scans. While detecting all cancers at an early stage is important, it is especially important in lung cancer. The American Cancer Society says that the use of LDCT could save up to 60,000 lives annually. There are screening eligibility criteria for LDCT such as an age range of 50 to 80, a history as a current or former smoker who quit within the past 15 years, and/or persons with a heavy smoking history. If occupational exposure puts a person at higher risk, they may also be advised to undergo LDCT.

## Community Cancer Screenings

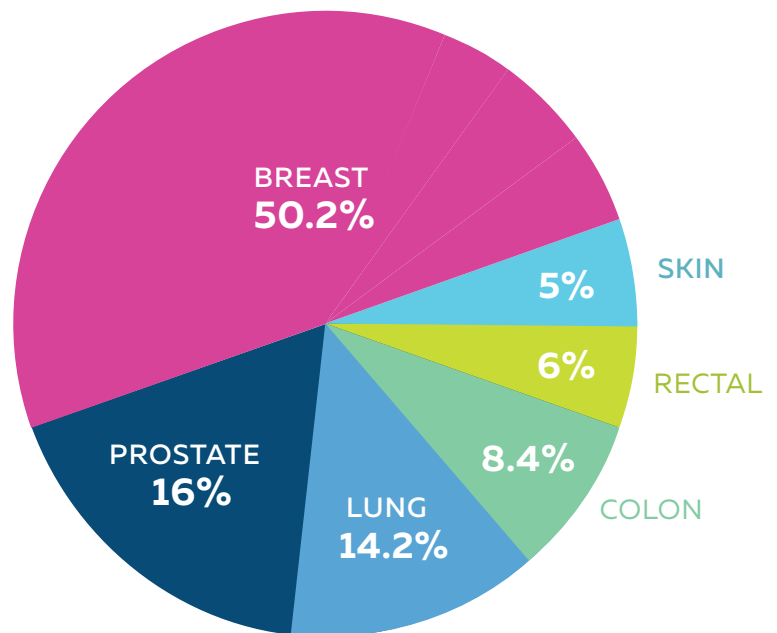
Pardee Cancer Center hosted two community screenings in 2023, including one for skin cancer with Jessica Gasperson-Shuford, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, and one for prostate cancer with Dr. Glover Little of Pardee Urological Associates. The prostate cancer was held during September, Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, at the cancer center and we filled all twenty appointments. Pardee Hospital Foundation graciously paid for the PSA tests coordinated with the hospital lab, so this screening was completely free to participants.

Our team also visited local businesses to offer skin cancer screenings to their employees. In October 2023, Pardee offered a free mammography night with Mammo on the Go, and performed ten mammograms that night with another eight women on a waiting list for the next event.

Pardee employees were also able to participate in a free skin cancer screening at the campus Pardee @Work clinic, and was very successful by filling all appointments.

At each screening, we also provide educational presentations and information that explain the importance of cancer screenings, at what age a person should start being screened for several types of cancer, and risk factors for developing cancer. It is our hope that the information provided at the time of screening and the expertise that our providers share will encourage participants to continue screenings on a regular basis.

We are most grateful to our physicians who volunteer their time to help with these cancer screening events and to give advice, answer questions and educate our community. Our goal at Pardee Cancer Center is to offer information and screening programs to the community, business and industry settings, and our employees, so that cancers may be detected as early as possible and, hopefully, prevented. ■



TOP CANCER SITES

PARDEE INTRODUCES AN

# Oncology Acute Care Clinic



As Pardee Cancer Center continues to create new services to support the needs of our patients, one question became clear – how can we support patients in treatment who have acute issues, without them having to go to the emergency room? From this goal, the Acute Oncology Care Clinic was created.

The Acute Oncology Care Clinic helps provide a better patient experience and supports immediate medical care issues that may be related to side effects or complications from their ongoing cancer treatment.

The clinic is housed within Pardee Cancer Center and offers same and next-day appointments. Jessica Gasperson-Shuford, FNP-C, the clinic's dedicated oncology nurse practitioner, offers several appointments each day to provide guidance and care for symptom management, helping patients avoid unnecessary trips to the emergency room while maintaining a healthy quality of life.

The Acute Oncology Care Clinic is open during Pardee Cancer Center hours from Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Appointments are required. To make an appointment, call 828-694-4300 (select 1 for Hematology Oncology, select 3 for Oncology Nurse). ■

## When to Call for an Acute Care Appointment?

Call if you are a current Pardee Cancer Center patient undergoing treatment and experiencing one or more of the following:

- Pain that is sudden or worsening or accompanies a new symptom
- Fatigue that is sudden or progressive
- Uncontrolled bowel movements
- Dark urine or bloody stools
- Changes in your urinary habits, including the inability to urinate
- New or changing levels of confusion
- Body temperature of 100.5°F or greater
- Symptoms of cold or flu
- Mouth sores or painful swallowing
- Vomiting or nausea not controlled by medication prescribed by your oncology team
- Bloody or coffee-ground-appearing vomit
- Abdominal pain, cramping or swelling
- Light-headedness, dizziness or weakness
- New or worsening shortness of breath
- Difficulty eating or drinking
- New or worsening shortness of breath
- Unexplained weight change of 5 lbs. gained or lost in one week
- New or worsening rash
- Abnormal bruising or bruising more easily

***Please note: This clinic is not an emergency room. Call 911 immediately for medical emergencies such as chest pain, stroke symptoms, severe shortness of breath, or if you feel you are experiencing a life-threatening symptoms.***

# Medical Oncology Update

Pardee Cancer Center has experienced remarkable growth since opening in 2016 – not only in patient numbers but also in treatment options, clinical trials, and support services. To highlight this growth, in 2017, medical oncology served about 2,600 patients. By 2023, that number more than doubled to over 5,200 patients. Similarly, infusion services administered roughly 5,000 infusions in 2017—a figure that increased to nearly 10,500 in 2023, supported by our skilled infusion nursing team.

Our comprehensive services are designed to meet diverse patient needs. We provide chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and biotherapy, along with blood transfusions, bone marrow and minor skin biopsies, and access to national clinical trials. Supportive offerings include palliative care, chemotherapy education, an acute care clinic, same-day lab services, and a multidisciplinary treatment approach to support every step of the patient’s journey.

Since opening, hematology, oncology, and infusion services department has expanded to include five physicians, two advanced care nurse practitioners, seven registered nurses, and two medical assistants. This year, we are pleased to have created a dedicated Oncology Acute Care Clinic, hired nursing coordinators for all three areas, and appointed Dr. John Hill as Medical Director of Hematology Oncology and Clinical Research Services.

What does this mean for our community? It means Pardee Cancer Center continues to offer services typically found at larger cancer centers—right here in Western North Carolina. We remain committed to providing top-quality, accessible cancer care for the communities we serve.



## Radiation Oncology Update

This past year has shown continued growth in radiation oncology’s patient volume and services. The growth of our treatment volume has allowed us to keep pace with the needs of our community, allowing patients to receive care right where they live, and nearer to their loved ones and support systems.

Radiation oncology has continued to expand the implementation of the latest technologies:

**Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT)** is the delivery of very focused high doses of radiation in five or fewer treatments. SBRT has been used for the treatment of certain selected lung patients, and we are now happy to report that we now offer this technology to prostate patients that meet eligibility criteria.

**Fractionated Radiosurgery (FRS)** will also allow us to treat patients with brain metastases in five treatments or less. We continue to look forward in meeting the growing needs of our community and offering the latest technologies.

We thank our patients, their loved ones, and our community for the trust that has been placed in us to care for them, and those closest to them, in their time of need. ■



## Cancer Services Directory

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Main Phone Number	828-694-4300
Advance Directives	828-696-1168
Appointments	828-694-4300 ( <i>follow prompts</i> )
Breast Center	828-696-1300
Breast Surgery	828-694-8438
Cancer Research	828-696-4716
Cancer Program Coordinator	828-696-1342
Chaplain	828-696-1168
Clinical Trials	828-696-4716
Mammography Scheduling	828-698-7979
Mammography Coordinator	828-696-1305
Medical Records	828-696-1094
	828-696-1096
Medical Oncology	828-692-8045
Medication Refills	828-694-8031
Oncology Acute Care Clinic	828-694-4300
	<i>Press 1 for Hematology Oncology</i>
	<i>Press 3 for Oncology Nurse</i>
Oncology Dietitian	828-698-7992
Nurse Navigator (Breast Care)	828-698-7334
Nurse Navigator (All Other Cancers)	828-698-7317
Physician After-Hours	828-696-1000
Radiation Oncology	828-696-1330
Social Worker	828-698-7364
Speech-Language Pathology	828-698-6774
Surgical Oncology	828-693-7230
Triage	828-694-8031

### Pardee Cancer Center

805 6th Avenue West, Suite 100 | Hendersonville, NC 28739

[pardeehospital.org](http://pardeehospital.org)