

The Flint Animal Cancer Center (FACC) comprises over 90 people, of which 10 faculty, 9 residents, an oncology intern, a clinical trials intern, 2 post-doctoral fellows, and over 10 nurses/technicians provide clinical services. Residents will receive training in clinical and investigational cancer research. Yearly duties vary but generally include 5 to 6 months on planning, CT set ups, and radiation patient management, 2 months on the combined oncology service, 1 month on medical oncology, and 1 month operating the linear accelerator. The remaining time is spent working on research projects, boards preparation, or in rotations in allied services of the hospital. Access to board certified specialists in a wide variety of fields is considered a strong point of this training program. The training program will focus on a comprehensive approach for the treatment of cancer in domestic animals. Below are some answers to questions you may have.

What is unique about your combined oncology service?

The FACC is unique in that we operate as a single service which includes medical, surgical and radiation oncology and clinical trials, for a strong team-oriented approach to patient care. Each day we have at least 3 faculty (med, surg, and rad onc) and multiple residents, interns, and fellows on clinics seeing patients. We round together twice a day and Oncology is a required rotation for 4th year students. Because we are all seeing cases as one large combined service, we are able to offer our clients consultation with multiple specialists at their initial visit while a treatment plan is developed. For a radiation oncology resident, this exposure provides an excellent first-hand experience with the other treatment modalities.



What are radiation clinics like?

We are a busy service and typically treat 8-10 patients a day, although we have seen days where we treat 16-18 patients in a single day. The combined oncology services sees about 6,000 visits per year with about 1,700 of those being new cases. In radiation we treat about 400 cases a year with definitive, stereotactic or palliative radiation therapy. We have 5 radiation oncology-dedicated nurses. The faculty on clinics oversees the treatments and appointments. Residents manage diverse cases, including surgical, medical, and radiation oncology cases. We also have a new radiation clinic space which opened in March 2018. Our linear accelerator is a Varian Trilogy with both 6 MV and 10 MV energies, multiple electron energies, dynamic MLCs, and volumetric arc therapy capabilities. Radiation oncology residents do not have primary emergency duty nor do they take transfers; however, they are expected to provide consultation with all services within the hospital on an as needed basis.

What about clinical trials?

We have a robust clinical trials service that manages patients enrolled in clinical trials or presenting as a new case interested in a clinical study. This service has 2 full time nurses and a coordinator, and is staffed by a dedicated trials intern and a medical oncology resident. The service is also supervised by a boarded medical oncologist. They see approximately 750- 800 appointments per year. The medical oncology residents rotate through the clinical trials

service approximately 8 weeks per year, providing patient care and recruitment activities. It is an excellent opportunity for residents to learn about clinical research and rotation through this service is available to radiation oncology residents should there be interest. In general, around 25% of the trials that are available involve radiation therapy.

What is the Master's degree all about?

Residents are required to enroll in the graduate school and take appropriate course work leading to a Master's degree in Radiological Health Sciences. This is a non-thesis Master's. The College will cover the cost of in-state tuition for up to 9 credits per academic year (27 credits over 3 years). Additional required credits are covered by the department in order to complete the Master's requirements. Enrolled residents will receive tuition assistance to cover out of state tuition costs during the first year of the residency program. Thereafter, residents who have established Colorado Resident status will continue to have in-state tuition costs covered by the College. It is, therefore, very important that a resident establish Colorado residency status during the first year of their residency in order to avoid paying out of state tuition costs in the second and third years of the residency.

Residents take 1-3 classes a semester (3-9 credits). These classes are typically before clinics start (7:30AM) or after clinics (5:00PM). There are a few classes during the middle of the day and the radiation team makes every effort to make sure that residents can attend their classes. Classes can be held within the VTH or on main campus. These classes include cancer biology, cancer genetics, radiation biology, radiation physics, and radiation oncology and will help the resident to prepare for their boards examination.

The resident is expected to attend and contribute to resident/graduate seminars for a total of 2 semesters they are enrolled as a graduate student. Additionally, two projects suitable for publication are required from the resident in the area of his/her special interest. Each resident's training program is individualized through the guidance of a faculty advisor and graduate studies advisory committee.

What other learning opportunities are available?

Physics rounds are held every Tuesday morning from 8:00-8:30. This typically consists of plan reviews and discussion with faculty, a medical physicist, and residents on how plans can be improved. The radiation oncology group also holds journal club every Friday from 9:00-9:30 and presentation of the journals are divided among residents and faculty. Residents also participate in a boards preparation with presentations and mock board questions once a week with or without faculty at their request.

What are the research opportunities?

The FACC is unique in the number and breadth of research opportunities available to the resident. In addition to opportunities for clinical research (both prospective and retrospective clinical projects), there are multiple laboratories within the FACC building, with expertise in cancer cell biology, molecular oncology, radiation physics, radiation biology, cancer pharmacology, surgical/musculoskeletal oncology, stem cell biology and cancer immunology. Residents are encouraged to pursue both clinical and laboratory research experiences during their training, and the breadth of opportunities allows for tailoring of the research experience to the resident's interests.

What is Fort Collins like?

Fort Collins is a college town in Northern Colorado that has an estimated population of 170,000 people. It sits at the base of the Rocky Mountain foothills at around 5000 ft in elevation. Summers are typically warm with temperatures ranging from 60-100 and winters are cooler with temperatures in the teens to 50s. We do see snow, but in general it melts within a few days. There is a ton to do including skiing, snowboarding, hiking, biking, white water rafting,

kayaking, paddle boarding, among so many other activities. Fort Collins is also home to over 20 breweries including New Belgium, Odell's, and Budweiser.

Can I work on the side or do locums?

In accordance with college policy, residents and interns are not permitted to practice veterinary medicine in private/specialty veterinary practices in Colorado during the course of their program. In order to practice veterinary medicine, residents are required to obtain an academic license through the State of Colorado which only allows practicing within and for the academic institution.

Do you provide health insurance?

Yes, and important details regarding health insurance benefits and requirements for veterinary licensure can be found at the following link: www.virmp.org.

What other support do you provide?

Each resident is given a desk and a computer that is compatible with hospital operating systems although some people choose to use their own. Each resident is also provided a set amount of financial support over the three year period to be used to help defray the cost of board exam registration, credential submission, and travel to take exams. The FACC provides financial support for residents to attend the annual meetings in their second and third years, and are given 4 weeks off to study for the ACVR (RO) examination.

For more information about the FACC, please visit our website at www.csuanimalcancercenter.org