



NEW TECHNOLOGY

OPENS THE DOOR FOR EARLY DIAGNOSIS

of Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is by far the leading cause of cancer death among both men and women. The American Cancer Society estimates that there were more than 161,000 deaths from lung cancer in 2008, accounting for about 29 percent of all cancer deaths. More people die of lung

cancer than of colon, breast and prostate cancers combined. To fight this deadly disease, early diagnosis is crucial. Thanks to new technology available at Community Memorial Hospital, early diagnosis is available to many more patients than ever before.

Joan Becht, 75, of West Bend, saw her doctor for her annual checkup last year. “My blood work numbers showed that there was a problem, so they did a bunch of tests,” she said. An upper body scan revealed a growth in her lung. Because of its location, however, a standard bronchoscopy wouldn’t work.

A bronchoscopy is a procedure during which a short, flexible tube is inserted down the patient’s airway. The tube can only go so far, however.

“The airways are just like branches of a tree; they get infinitely smaller as they go out,” explained Curtis Quinn, MD, cardiothoracic surgeon on staff at

Community Memorial Hospital. “Unless the lesion is in the airway itself, it can be very difficult to diagnosis with the standard bronchoscope. Your chance of getting a diagnosis that way is only 20 percent to 30 percent.”

To reach lesions that are outside the range of traditional bronchoscopes, Dr. Quinn uses the superDimension inReach™ System. This system enables physicians to locate, test and plan treatment for lung lesions and lymph nodes that are difficult to access with traditional methods. The minimally invasive approach is invaluable in diagnosing lung cancer in patients who are considered poor surgical candidates.

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“A lot of the patients we see have a history of smoking and emphysema, so they aren’t usually surgical candidates,” Dr. Quinn said. As a result, if a standard bronchoscopy cannot reach the lesion, doctors often have to take a “watch and see” approach. With inReach, physicians can now meet the needs of these patients. “This technology allows us to more easily identify patients with lung cancer and, as a result, improve their chances of survival,” Dr. Quinn said.

The first step in the inReach process is a CT scan, which uses special X-ray equipment and computers to produce multiple images of the inside of the body. “We then take the CT scan and put the information into the computer, which generates a three-dimensional image of the patient’s own airway. I use this image to map out where the target, or lesion, is and the route I will use to get me as close to it as possible,” Dr. Quinn explained.

“This procedure is really like driving a car with a GPS (global positioning system),” he said. “The technique is similar to bronchoscopy, but with the GPS, you know where you are in the route, and if you need to take a detour, you have that capability. Otherwise, it’s like driving the car blindly.”

Dr. Quinn then uses a tiny steerable catheter together with the programmed information and the monitors to guide him. “It tells me which way to go and how far away I am from the target. We literally steer the catheter until we’re 3 to 4 millimeters from the spot and can biopsy it.”

Joan had the outpatient procedure on December 4, 2008, at Community Memorial. “I think it went well,” she said. “I knew from the first time I met Dr. Quinn that I could really put all my trust in him.”

The biopsy confirmed the diagnosis of lung cancer. Because the cancer had already spread to her lymph nodes and because of her past history — she had a cancerous lesion removed from her lung in 1996 — Joan was not a surgical candidate. She is currently undergoing chemotherapy and radiation to treat the cancer.

For patients like Joan, the best chance for treating cancer is to find it early. “It is very difficult to cure lung cancer,” explained Dr. Quinn. “The best way to cure or treat someone is to find it extremely early. Now, with this technology, we can do that.”



The superDimension inReach™ System

Dr. Quinn has been performing this procedure since April 2008. He currently has the most experience in Wisconsin with the inReach system and is regularly called on to speak about the procedure and train other physicians. For scheduling information for Dr. Quinn, or to learn more about the specialty physicians at Community Memorial Hospital, call Careconnection at 262-251-1001 or 800-246-8332.

