

# spotlight

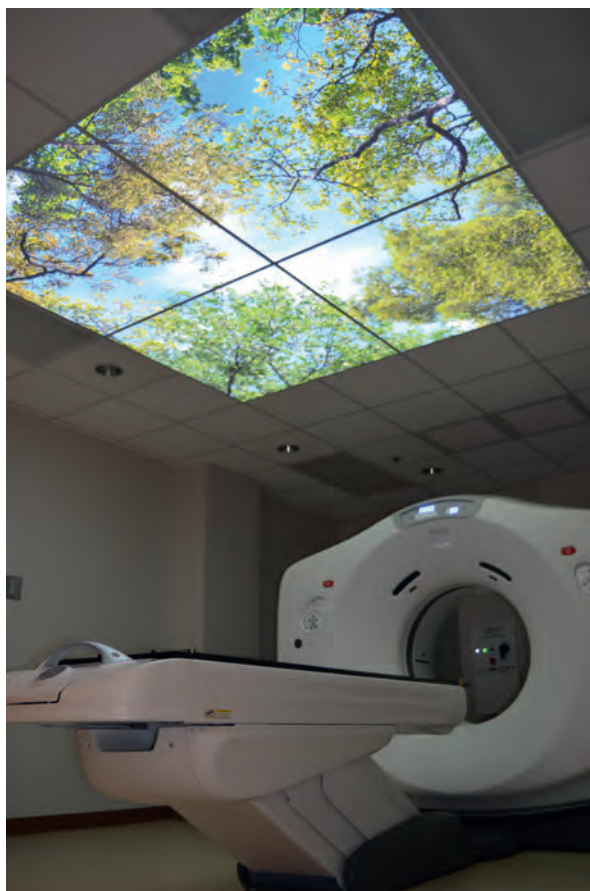
## John H. “Jack” Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center Berlin, Md.



Located just a few miles away from the Atlantic Ocean, the John H. “Jack” Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center serves parts of Sussex County, Delaware, Maryland’s Eastern Shore, and the eastern shore of Virginia. Seeing upwards of 350 new medical oncology patients each year, the Regional Cancer Care Center previously occupied two suites of a medical office building, with space amounting to less

than 2,000 square feet. In order to provide quality care to a growing, aging population—employment opportunities in Worcester County do not traditionally attract younger residents, and the area is a destination for retirees—Atlantic General Hospital, which owns the Regional Cancer Care Center and employs its staff, decided to build a new facility specific to oncology on the hospital’s main campus. On June 27, 2018, the doors to

the new 18,000-square-foot building opened for operations; the grand opening was held on July 11, and the new cancer center received accreditation from the Commission on Cancer in the same month. According to Katie Collingsworth, financial counselor at the Regional Cancer Care Center, the cancer center receives a great deal of community support. Patients will often visit the center on non-treatment days to see their caregivers. The number of patients seen has increased exponentially since the new building’s opening, and Collingsworth says that the new cancer center is happy to accommodate patients they could not have seen in their former location.



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Located on the Delmarva Peninsula near Ocean City, a popular vacation destination, the Regional Cancer Care Center is uniquely positioned to serve a disproportionately tourist population. Two-thirds of cancers treated at the center are melanomas, and many patients come from other areas of the country to continue treatment while taking a beach vacation. Local patients come from up to 50 miles away to receive treatment in this rural part of the state.

### Comprehensive Rural Cancer Care

The centerpiece of the new single-story building is its central lobby, with medical oncology, radiation oncology, and the infusion clinic all accessible from one location. The Regional Cancer Care Center is staffed by two medical oncologists, one radiation oncologist, and five nurses. With its expansion, the cancer center went from three medical oncology examination rooms to five and from five infusion chairs to eight with two private rooms. A dedicated oncology pharmacy is located on site.

The radiation suite is equipped with an Elekta Versa HD linear accelerator for the delivery of stereotactic body radiotherapy and radiosurgery and a GE 16-Slice CT scanner for diagnostic purposes. When the cancer program changed buildings, a local radiation oncology practice was acquired by Atlantic General Hospital, and its six employees were incorporated into the health system. As its need for oncology services continues to grow, the hospital is looking at new staffing models and has hired a mid-level provider to alleviate workload concerns.

Navigation is a central component of the cancer center's approach to patient care. On their first appointment, patients meet only with their physician and a nurse navigator so that patients are not overwhelmed with information. Financial counselors screen all patients requiring treatment and review chemotherapy orders for available assistance. Once treatment has started, a chaplain, a dietitian, and members of the palliative care team meet with patients to complete the multidisciplinary cancer care team. "Timing is everything," says Collingsworth.

The Regional Cancer Care Center also has a robust suite of supportive services on-site, including massage therapy, Reiki, and yoga; the center is currently researching ways to expand these services. The cancer center hosts two support groups: Women Supporting Women and Look Good, Feel Better in partnership with the American Cancer Society. An ambulance entrance at the new facility allows inpatients at Atlantic General Hospital to be transported to the cancer center for chemotherapy treatments as needed.

### **A Strong Academic Partnership**

Even with its comprehensive services, the Regional Cancer Care Center sometimes encounters high-complexity cases that require specific expertise. In cases like these, Atlantic General Hospital can refer patients to the University of Maryland Medical System for second opinions. This partnership also grants the cancer center patients greater access to clinical trials. Though no patients at the Regional Cancer Care Center are currently enrolled, eligible patients are discussed at biweekly tumor boards and referred to the trials program as appropriate.

As part of an ongoing partnership with the university health system, the Regional Cancer Care Center also offers telemedicine and genetic counseling services to patients who may be unable to make the two-and-a-half-hour drive into central Maryland. "It's been a huge help to our patients," says Patricia Marks, director of Atlantic General Hospital. 