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MEMORIALCARE® HEALTH SYSTEM

CyberKnife Surgery

A winning

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CyberKnife Surgery
A winning hand for Eunice

What Eunice Bovitz loves about poker is the camaraderie and a good bluff.

Playing since her 20s, Eunice, 78, is a regular at her weekly card club in Garden Grove. "I love it, it's great fun," she says with her contagious laugh.

But a year ago, keeping a straight face was becoming difficult as Eunice's vision started playing tricks on her. "Reading numbers became hard, a five looked like a six, a three looked like an eight," she says. She also noticed some confusion when driving, even around her neighborhood. "I would get to a stop sign, but I wasn't sure if I needed to turn right or left," she continues.

An MRI of her brain revealed two benign tumors—a quarter-size growth in an area not causing any problems and a walnut-size tumor putting pressure on her optic nerve, which connects the eye to the brain. Seeking expert care, Eunice found **Christopher Duma, M.D.**, a neurosurgeon at Orange Coast Memorial. The MemorialCare Cancer Institute at Orange Coast offers a multidisciplinary team of highly specialized physicians to manage neurological cancers.

Because of Eunice's age, as well as the close proximity of the second tumor to the main carotid artery and the region controlling her eyesight, traditional surgery was too dangerous. Another conventional option involved six weeks of radiation and also carried a high risk of damage to surrounding areas, along with the possibility of blindness.

TARGETING THE TUMOR

But through Dr. Duma, the active grandmother of seven learned about a safer alternative. Orange Coast Memorial is home to the only hospital-sited CyberKnife® in Orange County, providing patients with state-of-the-art robotic radiation therapy.

The device delivers beams of high-dose radiation to

tumors with pinpoint precision. It's used for the treatment of cancerous and non-cancerous tumors in the brain, pancreas, liver, prostate and lungs.

"There's no cutting involved, and the tumor, in most cases, is completely eradicated," explains **Ajmel Puthawala, M.D.**, medical director of the Orange County CyberKnife and Radiation Oncology Center.

Prior to treatment, the patient has a CT and MRI scan. The CyberKnife system uses data from this test to create a 3-D map that precisely identifies the location, shape and size of the tumor. Using CyberKnife software, radiation oncologists evaluate this information. The result is a personalized treatment plan that includes the amount of radiation to be used, as well as the angles at which the beams should enter the body to precisely target the tumor and avoid surrounding tissue.

POWERFUL BEAMS

The outpatient treatment usually takes one to five sessions of 60 to 90 minutes each. While patients lie on a flat surface, the CyberKnife's attached linear accelerator produces powerful beams of radiation, which are aimed at the tumor from multiple angles by a computer-controlled robotic arm that moves around the patient. The device's leading-edge, image-guided system delivers radiation so precisely that it stays on target even if the patient moves during treatment. There's typically no discomfort during or after. The staff even took the time to create a CD for Eunice's sessions with her favorite songs by Gladys Knight, James Ingram and Luther Vandross.

"For Eunice, a traditional operation would have required 14 hours of surgery, subjecting her to numerous risks such as a stroke, paralysis and loss of vision," explains Dr. Puthawala. "With the CyberKnife, she was here five times, drove herself home after every session and had no side effects."

"The thought of radiation was frightening," says Eunice. "But the kindness of the staff and their knowledge eased all my fears."

For more information, call (714) 378-7900 or visit memorialcare.org/cancer.

Thanks to CyberKnife technology, Eunice Bovitz