

M.D. NEWS

Special Feature

Computerized Diagnostic Imaging Centers

An Image of Perfection!

By Staci Márquez-Nichols

Riverside's Computerized Diagnostic Imaging Centers (CDIC) is proof that putting the patient first is the secret to its success. CDIC has the reputation and the record to back up its standing as the leading diagnostic imaging center in the region.

CDIC employs 26 support staff members, including six technologists. CDIC works with Riverside Radiology Medical Group, Inc. to provide the reports for all procedures done at the center. The company was founded in 1976 and has survived a few ownership

changes. Even with these changes, most of CDIC's staff members are longtime employees. Connie Gates, the marketing representative, states, "Many of the staff members have been with CDIC for 10 to 15 years or more and are the key to CDIC's success." Since October of 2006, CDIC has been owned by the Hospital Corporation of America. CDIC has recently gone through a major renovation. The technology has been upgraded and the center has a new, fresher and inviting appearance.

CDIC has recently added a new high-definition MRI. The HDMRI is a 1.5T Signa EXCITE by GE. It has specialized coils for both vascular and breast imaging. The dedicated breast coil will allow CDIC to help many women in the community. The GE is the second high-field magnet for CDIC. Thus allowing more patients to be scheduled and eliminating delays. CDIC also has upgraded their radiology/fluoroscopy equipment. This allows CDIC to be able to accommodate more patients needing myelograms, arthrograms and hysterosalpingograms. The center also has two state-of-the-art Acuson Sequoia Ultrasound systems. The technologists scan everything from routine abdominal and pelvic exams to specialized obstetrical procedures. CDIC also handles many vascular procedures routinely. Their Siemens CT scanner rounds out their full-service scanning capabilities.

Denise Leslie, CDIC's Director, has been with the center for 20 years — her background is as a technologist. Denise's focus on the patient is another reason CDIC has such a good reputation. The patient's care and comfort is at the forefront of every decision. She monitors staff, handles all compliance and ethics requirements and verifies all appropriate certifications are up to date and complete. CDIC's center is accredited by the ACR (American College of Radiology).

How does CDIC keep the 100 patients that they see per day happy? One of their first lines of defense is the patient satisfaction survey. Patients have their choice to take a written survey or can take it online. The survey is their way of keeping a finger on the pulse of their performance. CDIC also has a company policy requiring a 12-24 hour turnaround on all reports. With the recent addition of PACS (picture archive communication system) it will reduce that time further. Physicians can now sign on to the Internet to get their reports and images. Routine exams can usually be scheduled





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within a week. Physicians and patients both appreciate the importance of getting scheduled quickly as well as getting the results in a timely manner. They also offer Saturday appointments for MRIs and ultrasound. Connie mentions, "It helps that so much of our staff is cross trained into other areas. This makes for a very well-rounded group that can work as a team to solve issues."

What CDIC really excels at is catering to the patient and his or her referring physician. From the moment a patient enters CDIC's office, it's clear that they are in good hands. The atmosphere in the reception and waiting areas is comfortable and calming. Patients can watch the high-definition flat screens on handsome chairs and couches. These spaces, as well as the changing areas and family waiting room in the back, are all beautifully decorated.

One of CDIC's main concerns is ensuring patient safety. Since the MRI works with a large magnet, it is imperative that patients

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are screened appropriately to ensure that they do not have any metal in their bodies. They are screened during scheduling, during the registration process and then again by the technologist. Many patients are not aware that they may have, for example, aneurysm clips from a previous surgery. Through these in-depth screenings, CDIC's staff puts safety first.

Of the over 24,000 patients CDIC sees per year, about 30% are children. Denise says in her 20-year history with CDIC, the oldest patient they cared for was 105 years old; the youngest was just 1 day. Because patient care is top priority, CDIC has a full-time R.N. on staff that is certified by PALS (Pediatric Advanced Life Support) and ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) and has an extensive history working with pediatric patients.

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THE PHYSICIANS

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Starting at CDIC in 1987, Dr. Otto quickly established himself as a field expert in reading and analyzing MRIs. Every year, Dr. Otto speaks at a number of radiology conferences, including the International Congress of Radiology and the Radiology Society of North America. The Radiology Society is the most popular radiology conference in the world, drawing around 80,000 physicians. Dr. Otto's co-worker, Dr. Raymond Sakover, said when Dr. Otto gives a lecture every other word is what he calls a "pearl." Dr. Sakover states that despite Dr. Otto's soft voice, he can bring a crowd to absolute silence as they sit on the edges of their chairs, hanging onto every word.

It goes without saying that Dr. Otto reads about 99% of the MRIs at CDIC. With his training and expertise, Dr. Otto's reports are very specific and thorough. Dr. Otto's passion for radiology was



PHOTO BY CHASE LELAND

Dr. Sakover started working for CDIC in 1975 as one of its founding members. When asked why he became a doctor, he says, "It's a cornball story, you know, I wanted to be a doctor ever since I was a boy." Where most doctors do two things, diagnose illnesses and provide treatments, he feels radiology is both art and science. He says he likes "the hunt." Dr. Sakover says he is drawn to the analytical and intellectual rigor found in the many "gray areas" of radiology.

evident when he started talking about some of his most common work. In explaining the high volume of brain scans that he works with, Dr. Otto explained how the new high-definition MRI system that CDIC purchased in March shows not just masses and veins, but blood flow and fiber tracks as well. A few other things Dr. Otto liked about working with the HDMRI were being able to process exams faster, giving the patients more space, using better software applications and how all of this makes the experience easier for his many pediatric patients.

As for CDIC, Dr. Otto feels the reason for their success is simple: "We give good service." He also feels that one of CDIC's most outstanding services is given to children. He explained that all pediatric patients are extremely well monitored.

Like Dr. Otto, Dr. Sakover also hails from Chicago and the University of Illinois. Dr. Sakover started working for CDIC in 1975 as one of its founding members. When asked why he became a doctor, he says, "It's a cornball story, you know, I wanted to be a doctor ever since I was a boy." Where most doctors do two things, diagnose illnesses and provide treatments, he feels radiology is both art and science. He says he likes "the hunt." Dr. Sakover says he is drawn to the analytical and intellectual rigor found in the many "gray areas" of radiology.

THE TECHNOLOGY

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THE LIFETEST

Five years ago, CDIC started to offer what they call “LifeTest.” A LifeTest is an elective body scan done with a CT scanner for preventive purposes. The LifeTest, which is a screening tool only, is capable of detecting tumors, growths and other masses.

A full-body LifeTest plus a virtual colonoscopy can take as little as 10 minutes.

Patients have the option to scan specific body parts such as chest, heart (coronary artery disease), abdomen, pelvis, neck, sinuses or brain. Osteoporosis scan and virtual colonoscopy are also offered. Prices are affordable, and different scans can be mixed and matched at discounted rates. The patient leaves the office with a CD containing all the pictures from their scan. A full report is given to the patient as well as sent to their primary care physician.

Dealing largely with the LifeTest that CDIC performs, Dr. Sakover will sometimes spend as much as an hour personally discussing scan results with patients. He feels the people that opt for LifeTest fit into three main groups: people who have not complied with their regular doctor’s advice, super healthy people looking for reassurance and people whose medical providers or insurance companies will not give them a certain test they feel they need. Also, Dr. Sakover mentioned that many doctors come in for LifeTest for themselves.

One of their most memorable LifeTest patients was a patient in her mid-30s. She had come in due to a family history of coronary artery disease. It was discovered that she had an unrelated mass in her kidney. Her subsequent surgery saved her life — all because of the LifeTest screening. It’s easy to see why word of mouth has proven to be CDIC’s best way of advertising the LifeTest.

Remembering the old days, Dr. Sakover says CDIC has always been on the cutting edge. “In 1976, we got the first CT scanner in town.” He explained that, in those days, CDIC used to draw patients from as far away as Arizona and Nevada. “The heart and soul of radiology is in the United States,” says Dr. Sakover. Despite both the CT scanner



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and the MRI being invented in England, there are more radiologists in the U.S. than any other country.

The heart and soul of CDIC is its knowledgeable, professional and compassionate staff. With their “patient-first attitude” they ensure that they treat their patients as they would treat their own family members. The teamwork they provide results in a high standard of excellence and great patient care. ■



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