

# **Status of Particle Therapy in the United States**

Robert C. Miller, MD, MBA (Oxon)

*Professor, University of Maryland School of Medicine*

*Medical Director, Maryland Proton Treatment Center*

*Emeritus Professor, Mayo Clinic*

July 23, 2020

# Disclosures

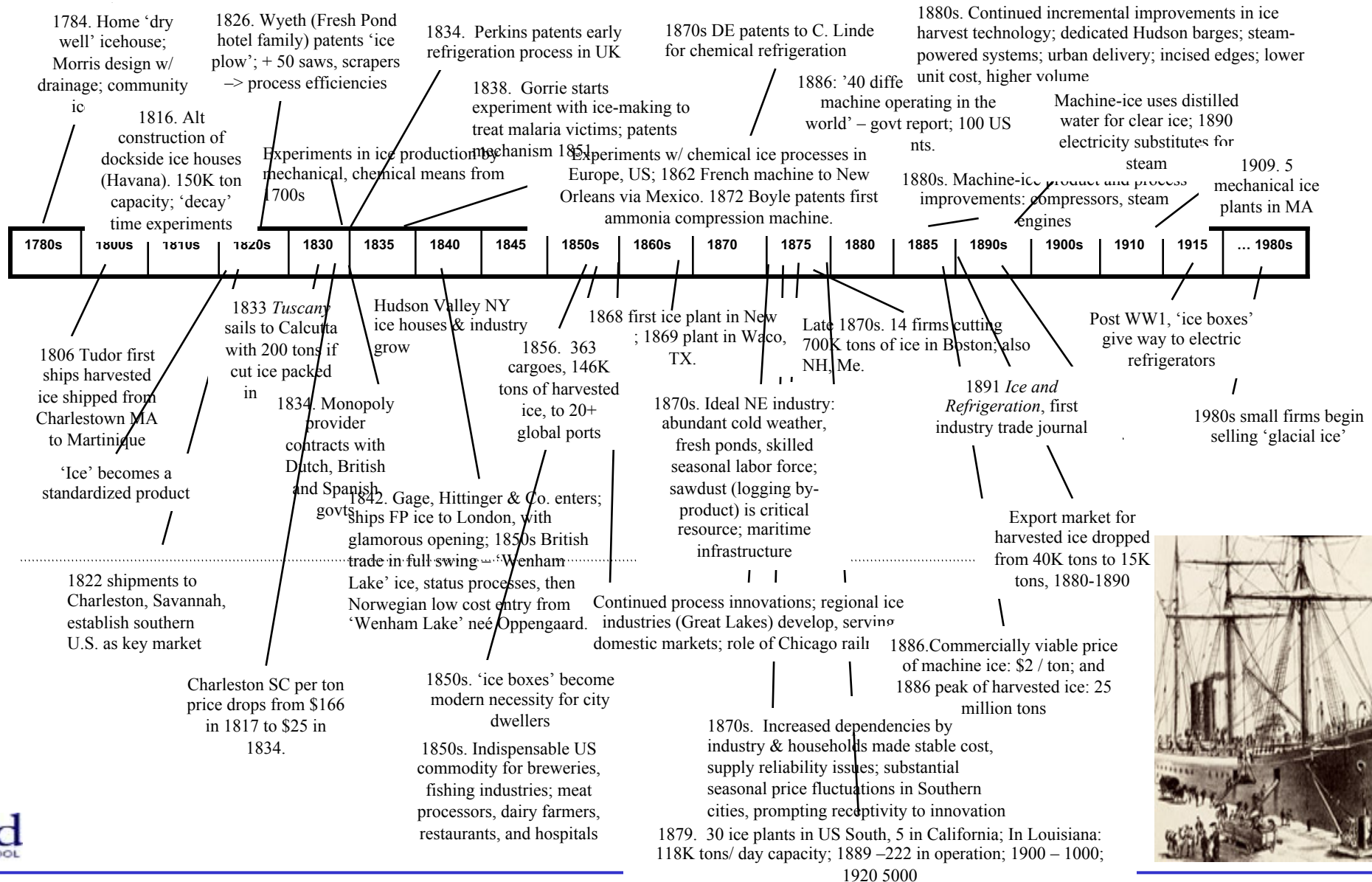
- ASTRO's Advances in Radiation Oncology, Editor in Chief



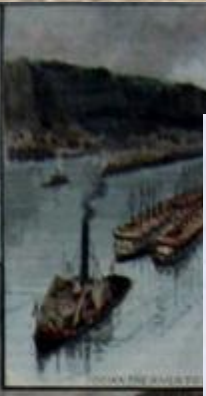
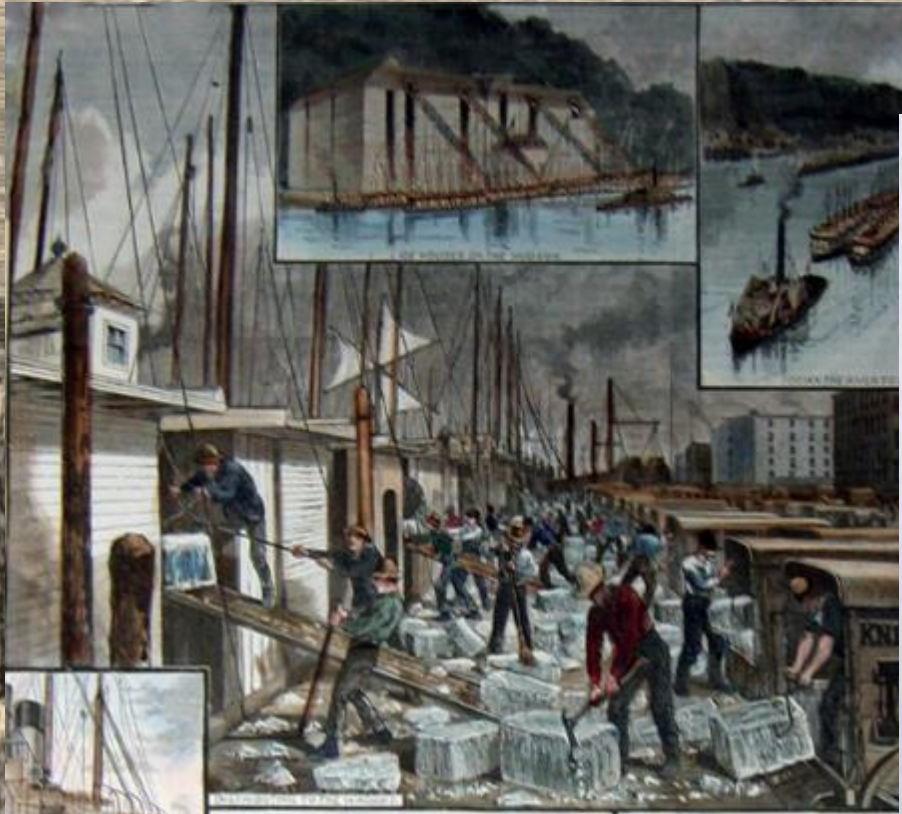
Embracing the  
Future Together

NAPT 2020 | JULY 24  
VIRTUAL NATIONAL PROTON CONFERENCE

# US 19<sup>th</sup> c. natural ice industry: Science/tech & infrastructure developments







ICEWORK AT HARTFORD, IN THE WINTER



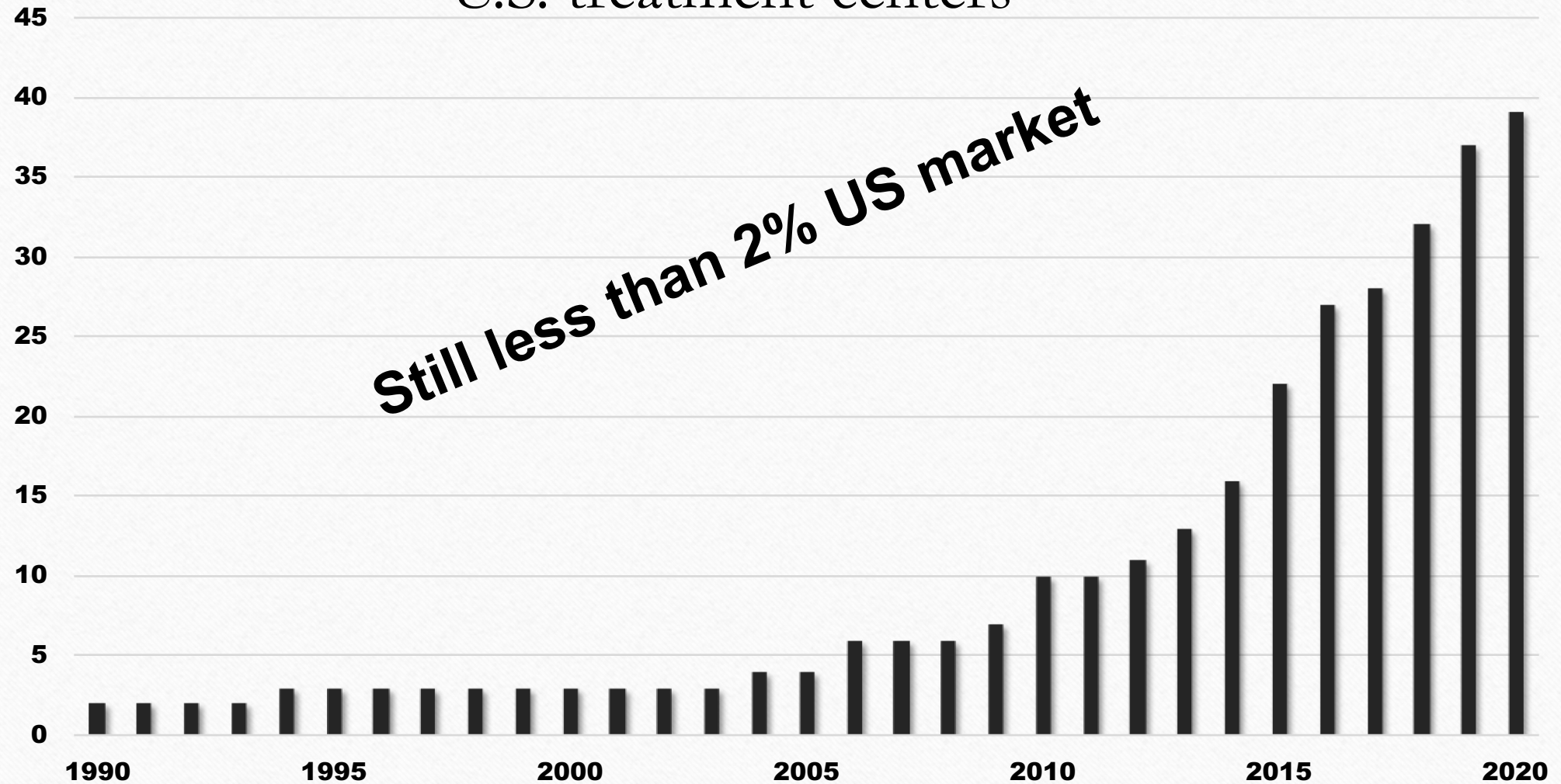


# Points to remember



- **“It is a serious mistake to treat an innovation as if it were a well-defined, homogenous thing that could be identified as entering the economy at a precise date – or becoming available at a precise point...”**
  - Innovations are rarely cost effective at their introduction
  - Process innovation may be more important than product innovation, i.e. rate of the growth or benefit may come well after introduction of a new technology like particle therapy
- **Disruptive Technologies are financially unattractive at first**
  - May require accepting a lower margin in financial returns
  - Tempting to try to go further with existing technology at higher returns at risk of being left behind
- **Technological trajectory is:**
  - Culturally dependent (Why are electrical power distribution systems so culturally distinct?)
  - Less inevitable than we think

# Trends in proton therapy: U.S. treatment centers



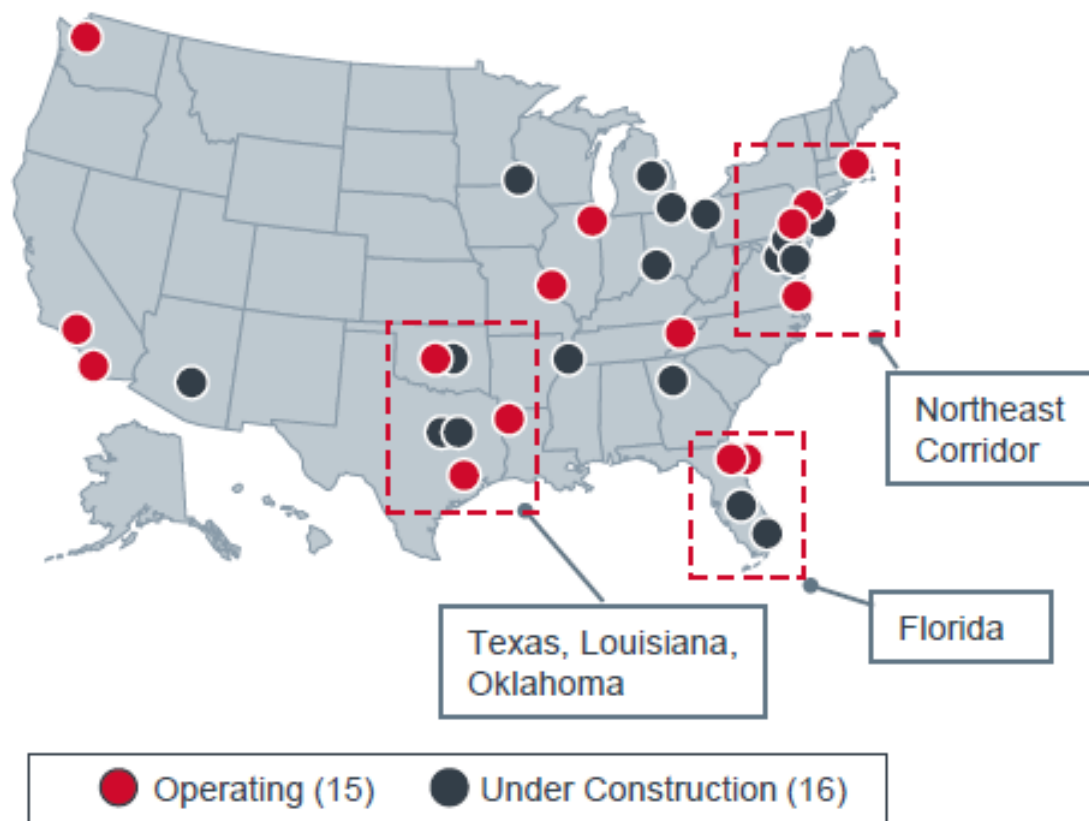
# Sufficient Demand Even in Crowded Markets

## Rising Tide Lifting All Boats

### U.S. Proton Therapy Sites

Operational and Under Construction

$n = 31$



“

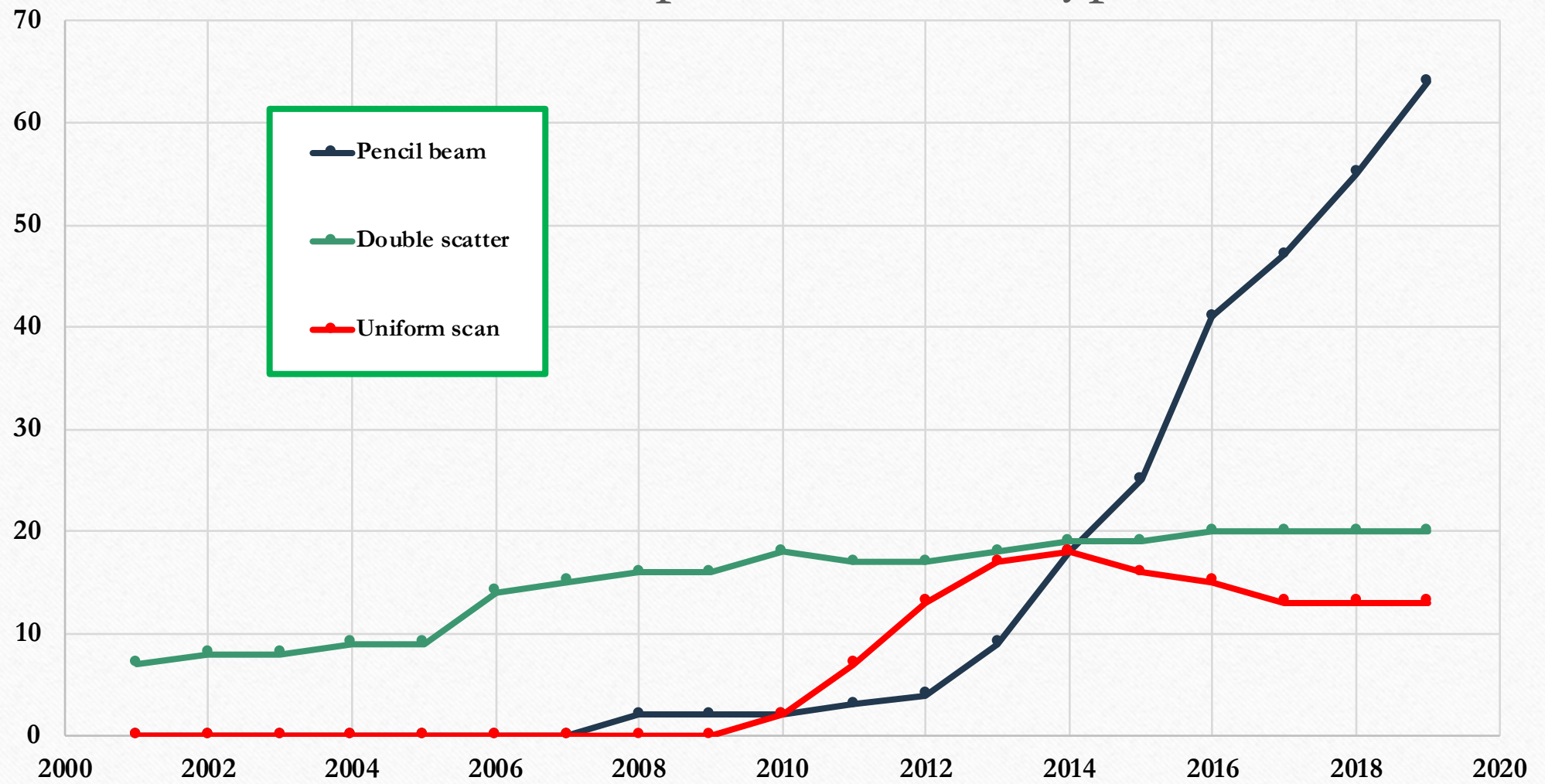
### Growing Awareness

“Existing providers have increased community awareness of protons – we’re not too worried about market entry. We think there’s enough demand for everyone.”

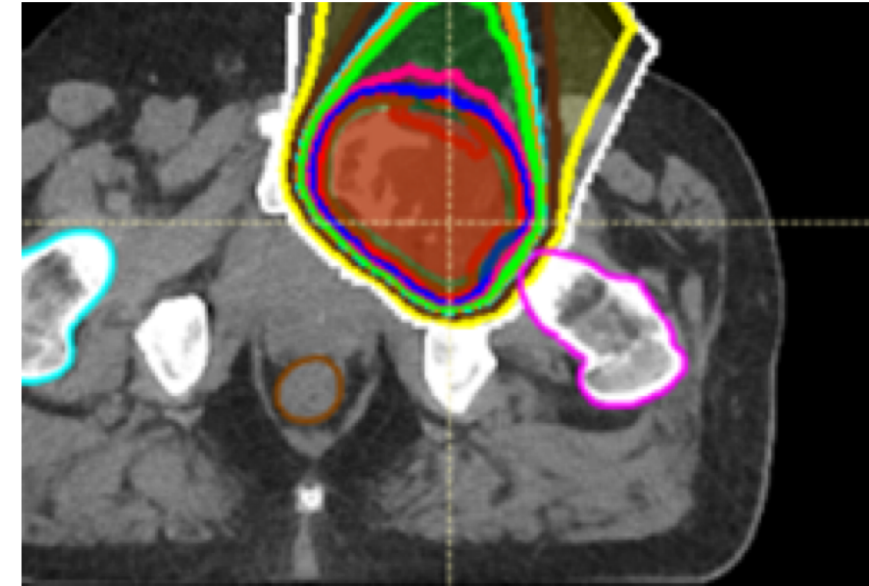
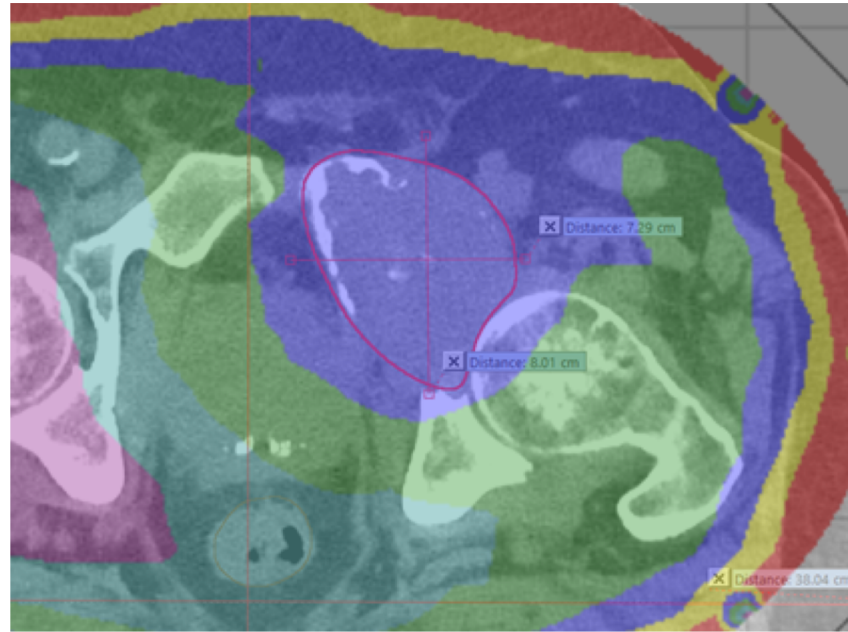
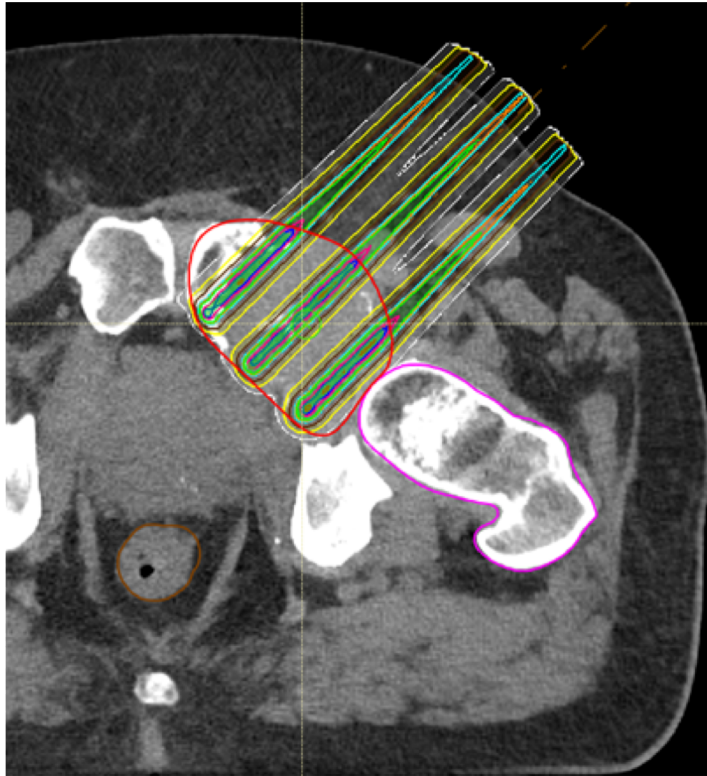
*Industry Contact*



# Trends in protons: beam type



# University of Maryland Proton therapy, Grid proton therapy, & Deep Thermal Therapy





# Conditions Treated (CY 2018)

CONDITIONS TREATED	CY 2018
Central Nervous System	
Brain	1,319
Other	301
Subtotal*	1,620 (14.2%)
Intraocular Melanoma	247 (2.2%)
Pituitary Tumors	50 (0.4%)
Bone Tumor	
Base Skull	171
Axial Skeleton	88
Subtotal	259 (2.3%)
Head and Neck	1,520 (13.4%)

CONDITIONS TREATED	CY 2018
Lung	788 (6.9%)
Soft Tissue Sarcoma	215 (1.9%)
Pediatric	
CNS	
Lymphoma	
Other	448
Not Categorized	0
Subtotal	1,169 (10.3%)
Genitourinary Tract	
Bladder	118
Esophagus	209

CONDITIONS TREATED	CY 2018
Hepatobiliary	105
Colon	49
	72
GI Tract	131
Subtotal	684 (6.0%)
Urinary Tract	34 (0.3%)
Female Pelvic Organs	65 (0.6%)
Prostate	2,981 (26.2%)
Breast	970 (8.5%)
Lymphoma	208 (1.8%)
Other	553 (4.9%)

Complex cases complicate business model → ↓ throughput & revenue by 30%

Notes:

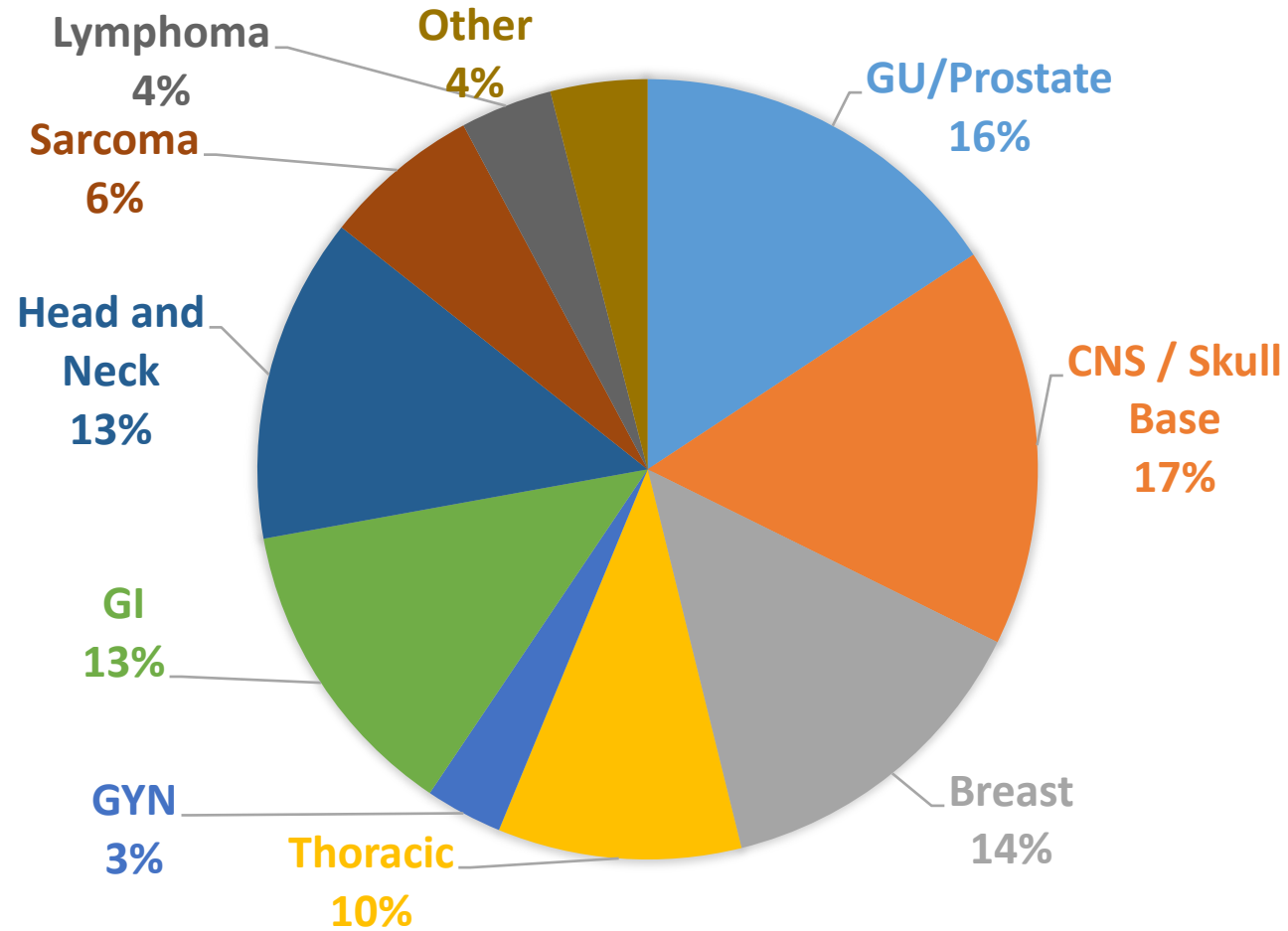
- Subtotal may vary from survey data as some institutions did not report by subcategories
- One institution did not report survey data but their number of patients treated were estimated based on publicly available data
- Estimated for non-reporting centers (3) based on average of 3 years prior data

Total (CY 2018): 11,379 ↑ 4.4% from 2017





## MPTC First 2,482 Patients Treated (*Through June 2020*)



➤ **Of these patients, 6% were pediatric cases and 22% were re-irradiation cases**

# Proton Therapy Trends 2020-2030

---



- **Capital equipment** → *will get cheaper*
- **Treatment delivery** → *will get faster*
- **Clinical indications** → *will grow with evidence development*
- **Buildings & People** → *Static costs*

- **Short Term: Cost efficient operations**
  - ↓ Revenue from prostate cancer
  - Greater complexity → ↓ Throughput
- **Long Term: Rationale evidence development**
  - Need highest level evidence to support proton therapy
  - Define appropriate use and coverage



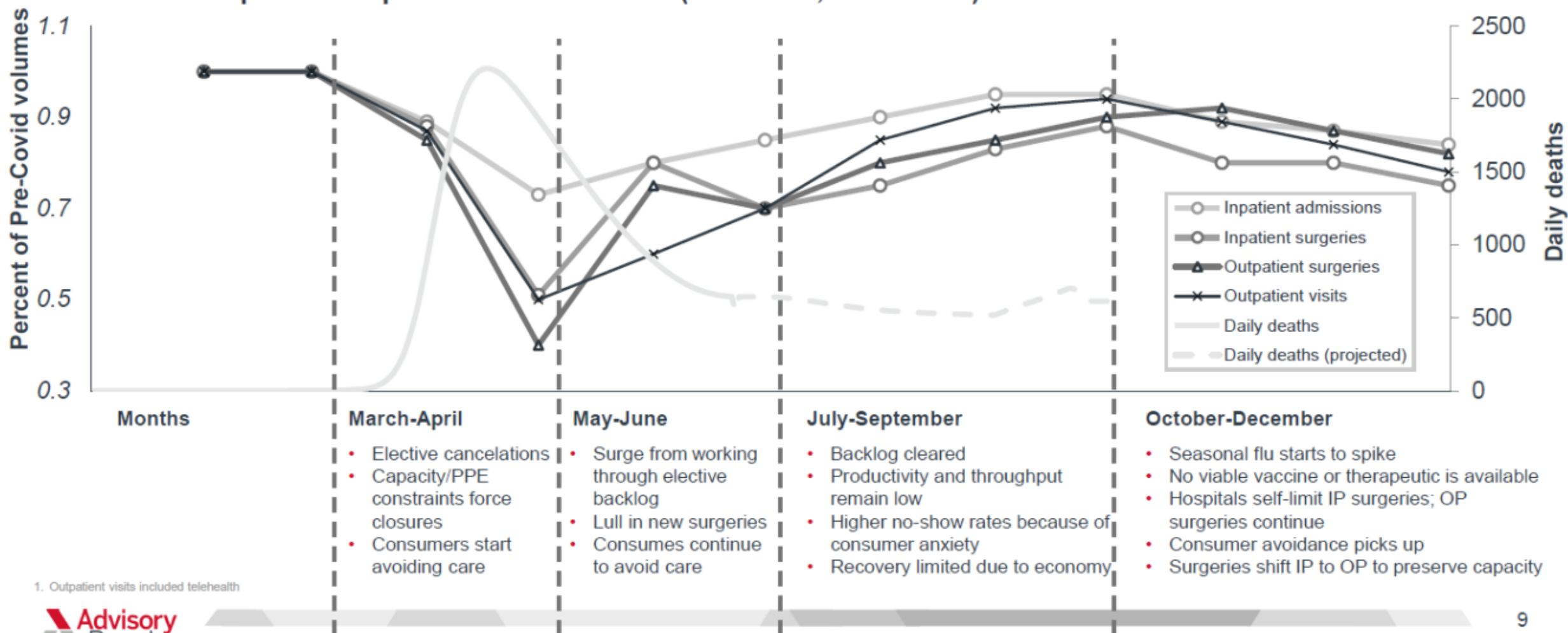
# Ideal Proton Therapy Research (& Business Success) Environment

- Integrated with an existing academic photon practice
- NCI Designated Cancer Center with a robust infrastructure base for clinical trial design & execution, as well as translational science
- Strong internal or external partner in comparative effectiveness research
- Academic medical center partnerships with other U.S. based proton therapy programs
- International cooperation through PTCOG & ENLIGHT for data exchange and clinical trials.

# Setting the stage for strategy: our reality has changed

Volumes will not immediately rebound—straining hospital finances

Volumes as percent of pre-Covid-19 volumes (estimates; illustrative)



1. Outpatient visits included telehealth

# ***COVID-19 and particle therapy***

## **Long term impact of COVID-19 on proton therapy**

- **Up to 40 million Americans at least temporarily unemployed**
- **American insurance for those under 65 primarily is tied to employment; Patients losing their jobs can lose health insurance**
- **Due to COVID-19, up to 20% of the commercial insurance market has disappeared (*NEJM, 2020*)**
- **Additionally, long distance travel for medical care to “destination medical centers” has almost stopped and it is uncertain what the return will show**
- **US Proton therapy centers rely heavily on both destination medical center strategies and commercially insured patients**



# Embracing the Future Together



NAPT Virtual National  
Proton Conference  
JULY 24, 2020

## **Impact of Payment Reform on Clinical Practice**

*Robert C. Miller, MD, MBA Univ. of Maryland & Mark Waddle, MD Mayo Clinic*

# The U.S. Government Radiation Oncology Alternative Payment model:

Goal of ↓ spending without ↓ quality

- Medicare patients currently are paid per treatment at a higher rate for protons compared to photon patients
- If enacted, U.S. Medicare cancer patients (50% of US Healthcare spending) in hospital based facilities will have radiation services paid for by a single lower fee not dependent on technology.

# Proton Therapy and the RO-APM

- Proton therapy *is* included as per the proposed rule
- The financial impact will be significant
  - Estimated -5% to -25% reduction for photon practices will be higher for proton practices
  - Increased capital expenses, reduced patient throughput
- This may create financial strain and limited patient access to proton therapy

# ***Mission Statement for a Next Generation Light Ion & Proton Center***

## **Push back the frontiers of knowledge**

Develop evidence to define the appropriate usage of proton & light ion therapy

Increase the likelihood of an *uncomplicated cure*

Leverage radiobiology of light ions to cure *intractable cancers*

## **Develop new technologies and techniques**

Translational science with European centers of excellence – Universities/Industry

Collaboration with CERN, European Commission, ENLIGHT

## **Train the physicians and scientists of tomorrow**

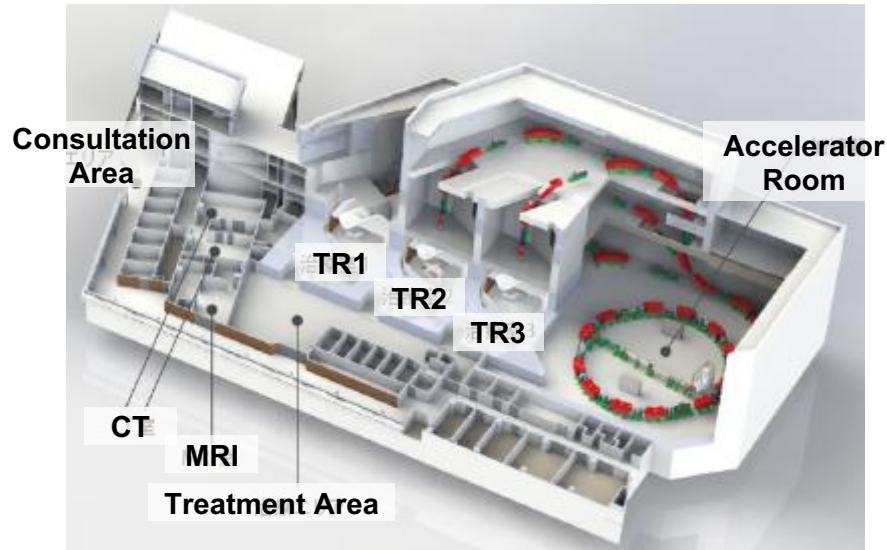
Advanced modalities fellowships; Visiting researcher and clinician training program

## **Unite people from different countries and cultures**

Collaborative science globally



- Scanning dedicated Carbon system experience : Osaka Heavy Ion Therapy Center
  - ✓ 3 treatment rooms with 6 beam lines
  - ✓ Treatment room Design focusing on patient and staffs' comfort




	Beam line	Additional Feature
TR1	H+45deg	Gating I/F, RGPT
TR2	H+V	Gating I/F, RGPT, in room CT
TR3	H+V	Gating I/F(clinically applied)

H:Horizontal  
V:Vertical



**Treatment Room**

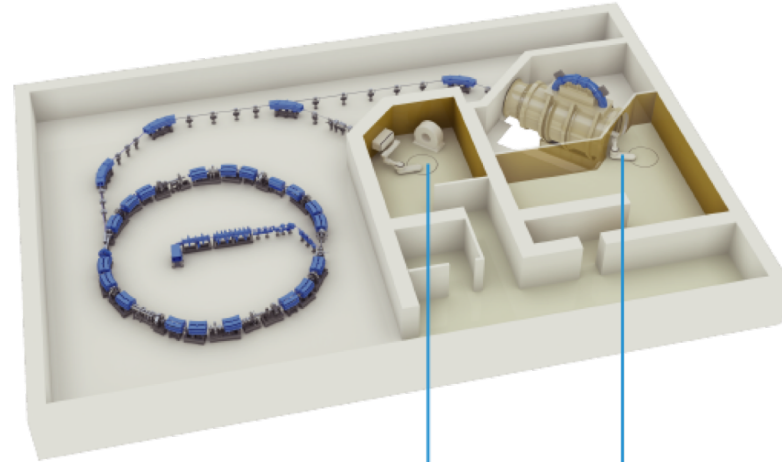
2018 Good Design Award(Japan)  **GOOD DESIGN AWARD**

2019 iF Design Award(Germany)



# Hypothetical University-based Light Ion Radiobiology Research Laboratory

**TOSHIBA**



- MD Anderson
- Mayo Clinic Florida
- Others – Bay Area consortium

\*This is for illustrative purposes only.

Fixed beam  
treatment room

**1**  
room

- Fixed beam nozzle
- Robotic couch
- SARRP

Rotating gantry  
treatment room

**1**  
room

- Rotating gantry
- Robotic couch

# Light Ion Therapy: Major challenges to be addressed in the US

## **Lack of a robust commercial treatment planning system**

Japanese and European models not in agreement; Raystation releasing carbon module in the near future based on European LEM. Heidelberg University has published on first helium planning system.

## **Lack of commercial insurance reimbursement precedent**

First US site will have to address this hurdle.

## **Evidence base was produced by a relatively small group of individuals in Japan**

Few corroborative results have been published from the trials conducted at the German and Italian centers

Highly select referral patterns in Japan may bias outcome reports by removing patients with a high risk of metastatic progression from the treatment pool before evaluation.

## **Unlike other nations, funding from the federal government not available for construction of a US facility**

Funding likely available for biological and clinical research, though.