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## **New radiotherapy guidance for patients with early lung cancer welcomed**

News that an advanced form of radiotherapy will be made available on the NHS to all suitable cancer patients in England has been welcomed by the National Radiotherapy Awareness Initiative, a group of organisations which includes Cancer Research UK, the Royal College of Radiologists and The Society and College of Radiographers.

Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy (SBRT) is a precise form of radiotherapy that has the capability to be superior to conventional radiotherapy both in terms of sparing healthy tissue and survival.

The guidance, published by the NHS National Cancer Action Team, recommends that SBRT be made available to suitable cancer patients in England, particularly those with early lung cancer. It also urges that clinical trials of SBRT in other cancer sites are urgently required. The report also recommends that patients with head and neck, hepatic and spinal tumours requiring SBRT are treated at specialised centres which treat significantly larger volumes of patients.

Peter Kirkbride, the National Clinical Advisor for Radiotherapy in England, who chaired the group responsible for the guidance, said: "There is the potential for a large number of cancers currently being treated by long courses of external beam radiotherapy, which often cause significant side effects, to be treated and cured with shorter courses of more accurate radiotherapy with consequently fewer side effects. Excitingly there is also the potential for tumours which are currently not treatable by conventional methods to also benefit."

Dr Jane Barrett, President of The Royal College of Radiologists said: "Modern radiotherapy is more precise than ever and contributes to almost half of all cancer cures. SBRT is particularly useful in some of the more difficult to treat cancers. We are pleased this cutting-edge form of radiotherapy will soon be available to all cancer patients who can benefit from it."

Hilary Tovey, Cancer Research UK's policy manager, said: "Radiotherapy is an important part of cancer treatment. We want the NHS to ensure that this treatment is available to all patients who might benefit. Guidance like this is an important step in the right direction. But we're also asking the government to take steps to ensure that radiotherapy gets the priority it deserves. This means making sure that the NHS has the right number of trained staff and specialised equipment to ensure that patients aren't missing out."

The full NHS guidance is available [here](#).

### **ENDS**

For more information, please contact Peter Zarko-Flynn at the National Radiotherapy Awareness Initiative on 07525 053795 or [news@zarko-flynn.co.uk](mailto:news@zarko-flynn.co.uk)

### **Notes to Editors:**

The National Radiotherapy Awareness Initiative (NRAI) is a group of organisations who are working to improve awareness of, and access to, radiotherapy services. Members include: The Royal College of Radiologists, The Society and College of Radiographers, Cancer Research UK, the Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine (IPEM), the NHS and representatives from all UK countries. NRAI has designated 2011 The Year of Radiotherapy.