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UW Medicine

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Tumor Board Confronts Head and Neck Cancer

EACH YEAR, AN ESTIMATED 1200 PATIENTS are diagnosed with head and neck cancer in the WWAMI region (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho). About 350 new patients receive head and neck cancer care at University of Washington Medical Center's Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Center, one of the few centers in the region to offer each patient a panel of highly skilled experts dedicated solely to the treatment of head and neck cancer, from diagnosis through rehabilitation.

As an academic medical center, UWMC offers each patient the benefit of specialized clinical care, as well as research into the causes, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of all cancers of the head and neck.

Treatment of this cancer is often complex and requires a comprehensive clinical approach. To ensure the best medical, functional, and cosmetic outcomes for patients, the head and neck cancer team takes an interdisciplinary approach to diagnose and treat all types and stages of cancers that occur in the tongue, jaw, larynx (voice box), pharynx (throat), thyroid gland, salivary gland, paranasal sinuses, and skull-base. Individualized treatment for head and neck melanomas, non-melanoma skin malignancies, and sarcomas of the soft tissue and bone are also provided.

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"At the UW Medical Center, head and neck cancer patients can receive the consensus of ten or more professional opinions without having to go to ten different doctors," says Dr. Neal Futran, professor and director of the UW Medical Center Head and Neck Surgery Service. "Our team discusses the diagnosis and a comprehensive treatment plan, including the best uses of surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy."

In addition to excellent clinical care and surgical expertise, the Head and Neck Surgery Center offers patients a team of physicians who specialize in rehabilitation medicine, as well as experts in speech and language pathology, audiology, social work, nutrition, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, and patient education.

UW Medical Center houses a dedicated head and neck inpatient unit and an experienced nursing staff highly trained in the management and care of patients with these tumors.

To refer patients to the Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Center, call 206-598-4022. For additional information, please visit www.uwENT-headneck.org.

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