

Pivotal Advances in Breast Cancer Treatment

AZ radiation oncologist anything but “quiet” on cancer care

Remember the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears? “Throughout the story, the mama bear laments something is wrong in one way, while the papa bear finds the same thing – be it a chair, porridge, the bed – wrong for the exact opposite reason. But then the baby bear gets it all just right,” states Dr. Coral Quiet of Arizona Breast Cancer Specialists. “That’s my aim – to develop a breast cancer treatment for each of my patients that is ‘just right.’”

And since she came to the Valley 20 years ago, that is all she has done – tried to get it all “just right,” which has led her to become one of the most respected breast cancer doctors.

The 1990s

“When I moved to Arizona in 1993, only 20 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer were being treated with breast conservation,” states Dr. Quiet. “This means that 80 percent of all breast cancer patients were treated with a mastectomy, a sometimes-necessary, but disfiguring treatment that can take years to overcome.”

By 1998, technology was growing, but breast conservation numbers were not. Motivated to advocate for women in this state, Dr. Quiet co-founded the Arizona Institute for Breast Health (AIBH), which gives women the opportunity to receive information and education about the best possible treatment for their breast cancer completely free of charge.

AIBH has a 20-member volunteer team of physicians and medical professionals whose specialties include breast radiology, breast surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, reconstructive surgery and breast pathology. This team, with Dr. Quiet at the helm as the volunteer medical director, evaluates the best medical and surgical options for the preservation of a woman’s life, body and emotional well-being, as well as the continued quality of her life.

The 2000s

As Dr. Quiet was spreading knowledge about breast cancer throughout Arizona, something else happened – she learned about breast brachytherapy, a five-day radiation therapy alternative for women with early stage breast cancer developed by international breast cancer pioneer Dr. Robert Kuske.



Dr. Quiet

“I am proud to not only have helped bring this treatment option to Arizona women, but to have brought Dr. Kuske himself,” states Dr. Quiet.

In fact, she did much more than just bring him here – she partnered with him in 2008 to found Arizona Breast Cancer Specialists, the first and only center in the world dedicated to exclusively treating women with breast cancer with radiation. In less than two years, amidst the worst recession in memory, they had expanded from one to three total centers in Arizona – Scottsdale, Gilbert and West Phoenix.

And, through Arizona Breast Cancer Specialists, Dr. Kuske is currently acting as co-principal investigator in the largest breast cancer radiation trial in medical history. His trial,

sponsored by the National Cancer Institute, is testing 4,300 women with head-to-head, six-week whole breast radiation versus his five-day brachytherapy.

“I am within months of finishing the trial, and believe the results will cause the biggest paradigm shift in how patients will be treated since Marie Curie herself discovered radium in 1896, which led to radiation treatment,” replies Dr. Kuske.

Today

So, with the success of her nonprofit and three bustling centers, can Dr. Quiet – who was recently honored as one of the “Most Influential Women in Arizona” by *Arizona Business Magazine* as well as a “Health Care Hero” honoree by the *Phoenix Business Journal*, finally say she has gotten it “just right.”



Dr. Quiet with gals from ABCS

“Hardly,” exclaims Dr. Quiet. “Technology is evolving each day, and it is our job to evolve with it.”

True to her word, most recently Dr. Quiet and her team became the first group in the Valley to use a Pivotal™ treatment solution for prone breast cancer care, a critical technology for large-breasted women that allows them to obtain treatment in the prone, or face-down, position. The advantages include a significant reduction in radiation to the heart and lungs as well as reduced skin toxicity.

Dr. Quiet, her team, and colleagues at the Arizona Center for Cancer Care have entered into a partnership with Scottsdale Healthcare to operate the radiation oncology facilities at both the Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center on the Scottsdale Healthcare Shea campus as well as the facilities on the Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn campus.

“Despite my name, I will never be quiet when it comes to our war on breast cancer. And, despite my own ‘Goldilocks,’ there will always be a way to make *just right* even *righter* for those we love fighting this disease,” said Dr. Quiet.