

Department of Radiation Oncology Newsletter



Fall 2026

Message From the Chair

1

New and Noteworthy

1

Featured Programs

2

Faculty Updates

4

Research Review

5

Education Highlights

7

Spotlight on Staff

8

Message From the Chair



I am pleased to report on the latest achievements and activities of our department. The Department of Radiation Oncology was honored to receive the 2026 BeRAD Professionalism Award given by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT). Mount

Sinai was one of only two institutions in the United States to achieve this impressive distinction.

We continue to bring the latest technologies and treatments to our patients with the expansion of our LDRT program for musculoskeletal conditions. In addition to osteoarthritis, we now offer the therapy for Dupuytren's contracture and plantar fasciitis.

In other news, Richard Bakst, MD has been named a Fellow of the American Society for Radiation Oncology, a distinction that only approximately 5 percent of ASTRO members receive. Kunal Sindhu, MD published an important manuscript on the current state of access to radiation oncology practices across the country in the *International Journal of Radiation Oncology*Biography*Physics*. His research reveals growing gaps in access to cancer treatment in rural parts of the country. This work was featured in an article in *Newsweek*.

Kenneth Rosenzweig, MD
Professor and Chair
Department of Radiation Oncology
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

New and Noteworthy

ASRT Bestows High Honor to Department of Radiation Oncology



The Department of Radiation Oncology has been awarded the prestigious 2026 BeRAD Professionalism Award by the American Society of Radiologic

Technologists (ASRT), one of the highest honors in the field of medical imaging and radiation therapy. This award recognizes our radiation therapy team's outstanding commitment to professionalism, collaboration, and high-quality patient care. The award is presented annually to just two institutions in the United States that demonstrate an exceptional culture of professionalism. Mount Sinai's recognition places it among the nation's leaders in delivering compassionate, high-quality cancer treatment.

"This award reflects the dedication, compassion, and teamwork that define our Radiation Oncology program," says Kenneth Rosenzweig, MD, Professor and Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at the Icahn School of

Medicine. "Our radiation therapy team is committed not only to delivering the most advanced cancer treatments, but also to ensuring that every patient feels seen, supported, and cared for throughout their journey. This recognition affirms the culture we've built together."

"Professionalism is at the heart of everything we do, from how we support our patients to how we support one another as colleagues," says Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T), Chief Technical Director, Radiation Oncology. "This award is especially meaningful because it reflects the everyday efforts of our entire team to create a respectful, compassionate, and high-performing environment."

Representatives from the department were recognized this past June at the ASRT Annual Governance and House of Delegates Meeting in Albuquerque.

Featured Programs

Multi-Channel Cylinder Program Now Available

Patients with gynecologic cancers, including endometrial, vaginal, cervical, and recurrent cancers within the vagina, can now benefit from the availability of the department's multi-channel cylinder program. The multi-channel cylinder is an advanced HDR brachytherapy applicator designed for patients requiring treatment to the vagina in an asymmetric dose distribution. Unlike a single-channel cylinder, the multi-channel design provides greater flexibility to shape the radiation dose, allowing improved coverage of the target while better sparing nearby organs such as the bladder, rectum, and uninvolved vagina. This enables a personalized treatment approach based on each patient's anatomy.

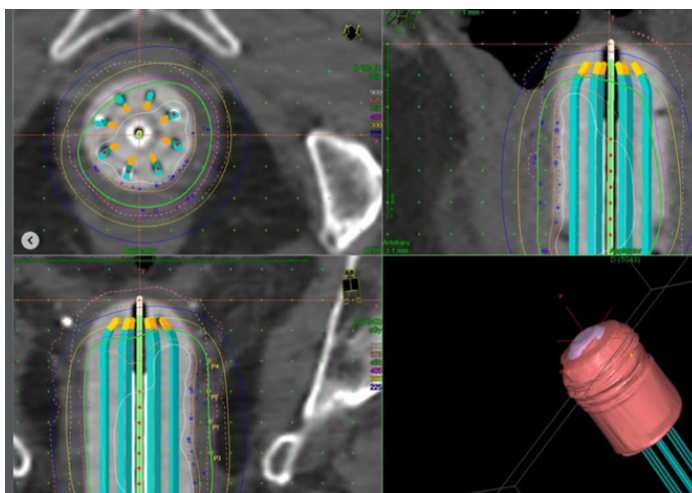
This milestone represents the multidisciplinary collaboration of Julie Bloom, MD, radiation oncologist, with colleagues from physics, including PhD, Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology at the Icahn School of Medicine; radiation therapy; and nursing. The implementation of the program—from commissioning the applicator and treatment planning to image guidance, patient positioning, and treatment delivery—requires close coordination to safely bring this new technology into clinical practice at The Mount Sinai Hospital.



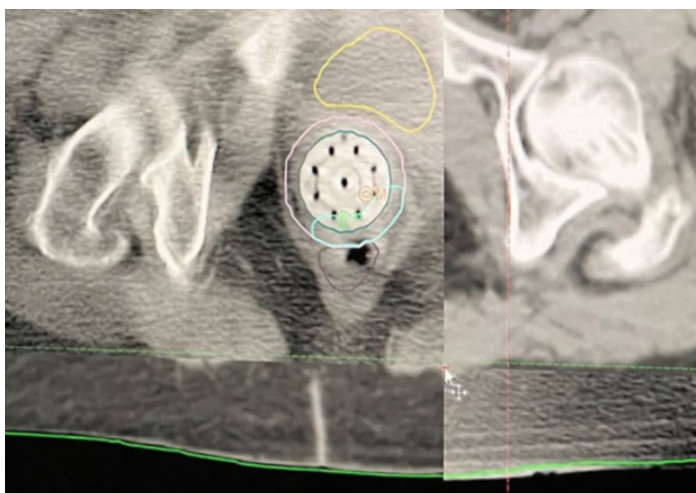
(From left) Dr. Bloom, Jenilyn Arevalo, RN, Leonora Mclean, RT(T), and Vishruta A. Dumane, PhD



Dr. Bloom reviewing image-guided cone beam computer tomography to ensure appropriate axial rotation of the multi-channel cylinder



Cone-beam CT (CBCT)-based image guidance with multichannel vaginal cylinder in place, used to verify applicator positioning and patient anatomy prior to treatment delivery



Multichannel vaginal cylinder HDR brachytherapy treatment planning, demonstrating applicator geometry and individualized dose shaping to provide target coverage while minimizing radiation exposure to surrounding normal tissues.

Featured Programs

Expanding Low-Dose Radiation Therapy for Musculoskeletal Disorders

In Spring 2025, the Department of Radiation Oncology launched a dedicated program offering low-dose radiation therapy (LDRT) to alleviate the painful symptoms of osteoarthritis.

This radiation therapy technique has been growing in usage due to its effectiveness and limited side effects. Most recently, the department has broadened the application of LDRT to encompass treatment for early-stage Dupuytren's contracture and chronic plantar fasciitis. Treatment involves a minimal dose of radiation—a much smaller percentage than is used for cancer. For Dupuytren's contracture, LDRT reduces the activity of fibroblasts, the cells involved in the development of the

disease. This helps to slow progression of the nodules and cords, which may reduce or prevent symptoms such as tenderness, tightness, and loss of finger mobility.

Plantar fasciitis is one of the most common causes of chronic heel pain, affecting millions of adults each year. LDRT targets the inflammatory process responsible for symptoms while avoiding surgery and minimizing disruption to daily activities.

For all three clinical applications, therapy is well tolerated, has essentially no adverse effects, and allows patients to continue normal daily activities throughout the treatment course.



For more information, call 212-241-7500

Dr. Rosenzweig to Begin Leadership Role of ASTRO Education Council

Dr. Rosenzweig, was elected the incoming Vice Chair of the Education Council of ASTRO, the world's premier radiation oncology society. He currently chairs ASTRO's Annual Meeting Scientific Committee and has led the task force that developed the Society's small cell lung cancer guideline.

Dr. Rosenzweig has also served on the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education Committee that oversees radiation oncology training. In his new board role, he will focus on supporting professional development at every career stage and helping the specialty adapt to a rapidly changing health care environment.

Richard Bakst, MD, Receives ASTRO Fellow Designation



Dr. Bakst has been selected as a Fellow of the American Society for Radiation Oncology, the world's largest professional organization in radiation oncology. He is one of 39 ASTRO members selected for the Class of 2026 and was recognized at ASTRO's 68th Annual Meeting on September 29 in Boston. This

prestigious honor recognizes ASTRO members' outstanding achievements and contributions to the Society, cancer research, education, as well as sustained achievement and service to the field of radiation oncology and patient care.

Dr. Bakst is Co-Director of the Center of Excellence for Head and Neck Cancer at the Mount Sinai Tisch Cancer Center, and Professor of Radiation Oncology, and Otolaryngology, Icahn School of Medicine. He offers

his patients novel clinical and translational protocols that allow optimization of tumor control while minimizing treatment-related morbidity. "My clinical practice is grounded in a patient-centered, team-based approach to personalizing treatment and, in alignment with the themes that also drive my research, which is focused on therapeutic ratio," says Dr. Bakst. "While we strive for cure, we must continue to improve methods to both minimize toxicity and improve outcomes by achieving the most effective balance between intensifying/de-intensifying treatment."

"ASTRO Fellows represent the leadership, expertise, and commitment that strengthen radiation oncology," says Vivek S. Kavadi, MD, MBA, FASTRO, CEO of ASTRO. "This designation reflects Dr. Bakst's longstanding contributions to the specialty and commitment to patient care, and we are proud to honor him."

Karyn Goodman, MD, MS, Serves as Guest Editor for ESMO International Congress



In July 2026, Dr. Goodman, Vice Chair for Research and Quality in the Department of Radiation Oncology, and Professor of Radiation Oncology, and Medicine (Hematology and Medical Oncology) at the Icahn School of Medicine, served as Guest Editor for the Special Issue of *European Society for Medical*

Oncology Gastrointestinal Oncology and delivered a special session on "The Evolving Role of Radiotherapy in the Management of Gastrointestinal Cancers" at the ESMO Gastrointestinal Cancers Congress held in Munich. Dr. Goodman's presentation covered precision techniques and integration with systemic therapies to improve outcomes.

The compilation of articles for the Special Issue highlighted the expanding and increasingly precise role of radiation across the GI disease spectrum, from esophageal and rectal cancers to hepatobiliary and pancreatic malignancies. The issue included articles exploring state-of-the-art approaches such as stereotactic body radiotherapy, adaptive radiotherapy, and proton therapy. It also addressed the synergistic potential of radiotherapy combined with immunotherapy and targeted agents and focused on defining how radiotherapy can improve local control, enable organ preservation, and enhance patient-centered outcomes, including quality of life. By synthesizing current evidence and future directions, this collection examined how radiotherapy remains a central and dynamic component of modern GI oncology practice.

A Focus on Access to Radiation Oncology Care

Structural Vulnerability in the United States Radiation Oncology Delivery System: Predictors and Consequences of Practice Site Disappearance



Kunal K. Sindhu, MD

It is estimated that some 50 million Americans now lack access to cancer radiation therapy. A new study led by researchers at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai is the first nationwide analysis to find rural and freestanding radiation oncology practices are more likely to close,

leaving millions with less access to lifesaving cancer treatment. The investigators found that although the overall number of radiation oncology clinics in the United States has appeared stable in recent years, closures of clinics have disproportionately affected rural and freestanding practices, reducing access for patients to receive lifesaving cancer treatment close to home.

Published in the *International Journal of Radiation Oncology*Biophysics*, the study systematically tracked individual radiation oncology practice sites rather than physician groups or health care organizations. Researchers examined more than 3,000 treatment locations nationwide using national Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services data collected between 2018 and 2025.

“Looking only at the total number of radiation oncology clinics gives the impression that access to care has remained stable,” says Kunal Sindhu, MD, Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology at the Icahn School of Medicine and senior author of the paper. “But when we followed individual treatment sites over time, we found a much more dynamic picture. Clinics are disappearing, particularly in rural communities where patients often have few or no alternatives for receiving radiation therapy. Understanding which communities are most vulnerable can help policymakers and health systems develop strategies to preserve access before these gaps become even larger.” As of 2025, more than two-thirds of U.S. counties—68.5 percent, home to approximately 50.8 million people—had no radiation oncology practice site. These counties had higher poverty and uninsured rates, lower household incomes, and fewer primary care physicians than counties with local radiation therapy services.

Reference

Sindhu, K., Yu, C., et al. (2026) Structural Vulnerability in the United States Radiation Oncology Delivery System: Predictors and Consequences of Practice Site Disappearance, *International Journal of Radiation Oncology*Biophysics*. (In press)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijrobp.2026.06.3090>

The investigators say the findings could help inform future policies designed to strengthen access to cancer care in underserved communities and improve reimbursement models that support vulnerable radiation oncology centers.

Clinical Trial Results: Combination Therapy for Pancreatic Head Cancer

Adjuvant Chemotherapy ± Chemoradiotherapy for Adenocarcinoma of the Pancreatic Head: Results of the Radiotherapy Random Assignment of NRG Oncology/RTOG 0848

In addition to her role as Vice Chair for Research and Quality, Karyn A. Goodman, MD, MS, is the Associate Director for Network Clinical Research at the Mount Sinai Tisch Cancer Center, and Co-Director of the Center of Excellence for Pancreatic Cancer. Dr. Goodman recently served as the National Radiation Oncology Principal Investigator for the RTOG 0848 study, which assessed whether adding fluoropyrimidine sensitized radiotherapy (CXRT) to adjuvant chemotherapy improves overall survival (OS) after curative intent resection of the pancreatic head. The multicenter, randomized phase III was a two-step trial: Step 1 studied gemcitabine versus gemcitabine + erlotinib (previously reported). Step 2 was a random assignment to sixth chemotherapy cycle ± CXRT after five cycles of step 1 chemotherapy without progression.

Results of the Step 2 research phase have now been published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. A total of 354 patients (median age 63, 55 percent male,

56 percent performance status) were randomly assigned to chemotherapy (174) or chemotherapy + CXRT (180). The researchers concluded, “the addition of adjuvant CXRT to adjuvant gemcitabine did not statistically significantly improve OS [overall survival], DFS [disease free survival,] or increase grade 4/5 toxicity. For node-negative patients, CXRT improved OS and DFS. These results, if confirmed in studies with current or future systemic therapies, would support the use of adjuvant/neoadjuvant CXRT for node-negative patients.”

Reference

Abrams RA, Winter KA, Goodman KA, et al. Adjuvant Chemotherapy ± Chemoradiotherapy for Adenocarcinoma of the Pancreatic Head: Results of the Radiotherapy Random Assignment of NRG Oncology/RTOG 0848. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. 2026 Aug 20;44(24):2316-2328. <https://doi.org/10.1200/jco-25-02520>

Esophageal Cancer: Minimizing Side Effects to Surrounding Organs

The Impact of Lung and Heart Radiation Dose During Preoperative Chemoradiation on Overall Survival in Esophageal Cancer: A Post Hoc Analysis of CALGB 80803 (Alliance)

Drs. Dumane and Goodman, and Eric J. Lehrer, MD, a former resident in radiation oncology at Mount Sinai and first author on the paper, served as investigators on a study evaluating whether the radiation doses delivered to the heart and lungs are associated with overall survival (OS) and assessed the impact of intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) on adherence with protocol-specified dose constraints. The prospective study, which involved robust quality assurance, showed that minimizing low dose volume to the lungs (V10 Gy) and to the heart (V30 Gy) were associated with a significant survival benefit.

These outcomes suggest that utilization of IMRT over 3D-CRT should be considered when designing radiation plans for patients with esophageal cancer.

Reference

Lehrer EJ, Geyer S, Goodrich A, Haydu LE, Ilson D, Dumane V, Noonan A, Goodman KA. The Impact of Lung and Heart Radiation Dose During Preoperative Chemoradiation on Overall Survival in Esophageal Cancer-A Post Hoc Analysis of CALGB 80803 (Alliance). *International Journal of Radiation Oncology *Biology*Physics*. 2026 Jul 15;125(4):1030-1042. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijrobp.2026.01.032>

Education Highlights

Kudos to Class of 2026 Radiation Oncology Residency Graduates



Daniel Cherry, MD, MAS Juliana Runnels, MD

Congratulations to Daniel Cherry, MD, MAS, and Juliana Runnels, MD, on their graduation from the Radiation Oncology Residency Program. We celebrate their years of hard work, dedication, and growth as they embark on the next stage of their careers. Dr. Cherry has joined the Yale School of Medicine with a clinical practice at Yale New Haven Health and the Connecticut Proton Therapy Center in Wallingford and Trumbull, Connecticut. Dr. Runnels has joined Weill Cornell Medicine with a clinical practice at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

Throughout their training, Dr. Cherry and Dr. Runnels have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in patient care, education, research, and collaboration.



Front row, from left: Drishti Panse, MD, Subhangi Shah, MD, Lauren Jacobs, MD, and Danielle Arons, MD. Back row, from left: Nicholas Murphy, MD, Dr. Cherry, Monica Wassel, MD, Anna Skakodub, MD, Benjamin Tran, MD, Dr. Runnels, MD, and Dr. Rosenzweig.

Their compassion, professionalism, and dedication to advancing the field of radiation oncology have made a lasting impact on our patients, colleagues, and department. We are proud of all they have accomplished and look forward to following their future successes.

Mount Sinai Center for Radiation Sciences Education

Honoring Medical Dosimetry and Radiation Therapy Graduates

Following two years of hard work, perseverance, and dedication to patient-centered care, our medical dosimetry and radiation therapy graduates begin the next chapter of their professional journeys. A heartfelt thank you to Mount Sinai and Stony Brook University leadership for their continued support and commitment

to the success of our programs and students. We are also deeply grateful to the radiation therapists and medical dosimetrists who have mentored, guided, and inspired our students every step of the way. Their support and dedication help shape the future of our profession.



Left to right: Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T), Chief Technical Director, with Radiation Therapy Graduates and Program Director Danielle McDonagh, DHSc, MS, RT (T)



Medical Dosimetry Graduates

Recognizing Radiation Oncology Employees System-Wide

We are proud to announce that several of our radiation oncology colleagues across the Mount Sinai Health System have received distinction in the We Are Mount Sinai employee recognition program. Please join the department in congratulating them for their outstanding efforts on behalf of our patients.

We Are Mount Sinai.

Celebrating excellence: Radiation therapy is a highly specialized field of medicine that demands technical expertise and precision for treating complex cancers and select benign medical conditions.

A heartfelt thank you to our outstanding team of Radiation Therapists. You demonstrate an unwavering commitment to delivering radiotherapy at the highest level of safety and quality. The professionalism, dedication, and genuine compassion you bring to patient care every day does not go unnoticed. Our patients say it best:

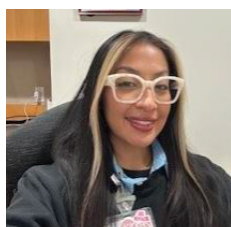
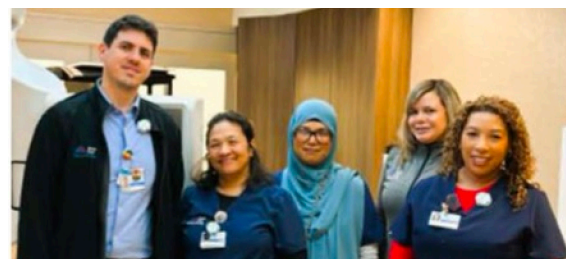
- “I couldn’t ask for better care or concern regarding a complex health situation.”
- “They score at the top level for the engagement they had with me.”
- “The best team! Blessings to all!”

We proudly recognize and celebrate every member of the Radiation Therapy Team.

Manjeet Chadha, MD, MHA, FASTRO, FACR, and Astrid Lenis, Senior Director, Radiation Oncology



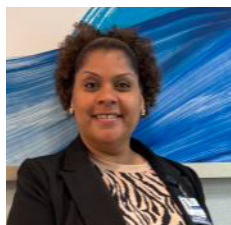
Radiation Oncology Team, Mount Sinai-Union Square and The Blavatnik Family Chelsea Medical Center.



Lizbeth Ushina

“I am recognizing Lizbeth Ushina for the professionalism she demonstrates each day and her strong commitment to high-quality service. She works effectively with each discipline and willingly steps in whenever there is a need, never saying ‘that’s not part of my job.’ Her positive, warm attitude has earned the appreciation of both staff and patients. We are also proud to acknowledge her acceptance into the Emerging Leaders Program, which reflects her dedication to growth and excellence.”

Carol White, Ambulatory Practice Supervisor, Radiation Oncology



Melissa Vazquez

“Melissa Vazquez, Practice Supervisor for Radiation Oncology at Mount Sinai-Union Square, went above and beyond for a patient that arrived at the wrong site for their appointment at the end of the day. The patient ambulates with a cane and felt overwhelmed. Melissa called our Radiation Oncology Department at The Blavatnik Family Chelsea Medical Center to inform them of what happened. Melissa then traveled with the patient by bus to ensure that they reached the destination safely. This greatly relieved anxiety for the patient, who was able to have access to care. Thank you, Melissa! You are a role model!”

Shari Weisburd, Clinical Nurse Manager, Radiation Oncology

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We welcome and care for our patients and each other, every step of the way.

Celebrating Decades of Service

In June 2026, the Department of Radiation Oncology gathered to recognize colleagues who had reached significant milestones in their years of service spanning from those celebrating a five-year anniversary to some who have worked at Mount Sinai for over 30 years. We appreciate the dedication and commitment that has helped shape our team and strengthen the care we provide every day. Each milestone represents countless contributions to our patients, colleagues, learners, and institution.

Thank you to all of our honorees for their professionalism, compassion, leadership, and unwavering commitment to excellence. We are grateful for all that you do and proud to celebrate these important achievements.



Serving Western Queens With Distinction

Mount Sinai Queens is committed to providing the western Queens community with the best outpatient, emergency, and inpatient medical care. Patients have access to our highly trained team of nearly 500 physicians representing close to 40 medical and surgical specialties and subspecialties. Unfortunately, due to aging equipment, the Department of Radiation Oncology at Mount Sinai Queens no longer treats patients on site, but we continue our care at our Manhattan locations. We thank everyone who worked in the department and the compassion they gave to the community.



Left to Right: Mohamed Radhouani, RT(T), Shanay Lewis, RN, Jill Schaeffer, Denise Passarelli, RT(T), Mehrez Allouchi, RT(T), Cynthia Aguirre, Raven Ruple

A Global Message on Music and Medicine



Andrew Rossetti, PhD, LCAT, MT-BC, Director of Oncology Music Therapy, and Joanne Loewy, DA, LCAT, MT-BC, Founding Music Therapy Director, both with the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine at Mount Sinai-Union Square, were recently invited to lecture on Mount Sinai's music therapy program in radiation oncology at the famed Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia. Their talk focused on music psychotherapy in cancer care.

Dr. Rossetti and Dr. Loewy with Clare O'Callaghan, PhD, Researcher, St. Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne, Australia

World Cup Team Spirit on Display

As the FIFA World Cup 2026 captured the enthusiasm of fans worldwide, and the Department of Radiation Oncology was no exception. On July 13, as Spain and Argentina competed for the coveted cup, our teams swapped their usual scrubs for their favorite soccer jerseys in honor of the event. The colorful gesture brought a little extra energy to the day and brightened the spirits of patients who enjoyed the department's esprit de corps on display.



Left to Right: Kimberly Madera, Lorena Pesantez-Mihov, Associate Director Administration, Cynthia Aguirre



Left to Right: Lauren Monarque, RT(T), Vincent Gazzara, RT(T), Kevin Minassian, RT(T), Angela Dallner, RT(T), Mehrez Allouchi, RT(T), Jennifer Donis, RT(T), Michelle Arguello, RT(T), Zyhra Casero, RT(T), Leonora Mclean, RT(T), Marissa Segui

Mount Sinai Radiation Oncology Social Media

Interested in joining the social media committee?

Have a photo you would like to post?

Please reach out on our social platforms below.



Follow Us on Instagram

[@MountSinaiRadOnc](https://www.instagram.com/MountSinaiRadOnc)

[@MountSinaiRTTedu](https://www.instagram.com/MountSinaiRTTedu)



Watch Educational Programs on YouTube

To learn more about the radiation oncology simulation and treatment process, view our educational video playlist on [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) by searching Mount Sinai Radiation Oncology.



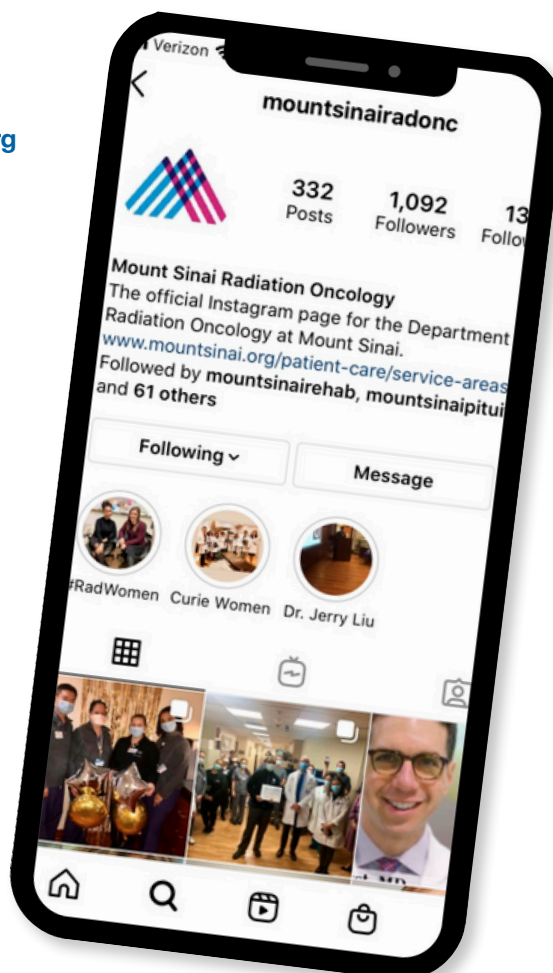
Reach Residents on X

Follow our Mount Sinai Radiation Oncology residents on X searching the handle [@MSROResidents](https://twitter.com/MSROResidents)



Share Your News

Email us at radoncnews@mountsinai.org



Department of Radiation Oncology - Our Locations

The Mount Sinai Hospital

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New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai*

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*Eye plaque radiation therapy

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Mount Sinai-Union Square

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