

Clinical Physics Workload at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

There are approximately 30 clinical physicists providing routine service at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center (MDACC), which treated approximately 4,600 patients in fiscal year 03. Our staffing model has faculty physicists spending approximately 60% of their time and professional staff physicists spending approximately 80% of their time providing routine clinical service. The time remaining is to be spent on program development, education, and extra-curricular activities. The result is that there are approximately 21 FTE's for routine clinical physics service.

The following is a general breakdown of these 21 FTE's for clinical service:

1. Patient specific services	10 FTE's
2. Planning systems	2 FTE's
3. Accelerators	1 FTE's
4. Imaging Systems	1 FTE
5. Clinical meetings	1 FTE
6. General Administration/Communication	5 FTE's
7. Infrastructure support	1 FTE

Significant time is spent on the following patient specific services: review before a patient starts treatment, weekly chart checks, breast and head and neck planning, and stereotactic radiosurgery. Adequate communication is an ongoing exercise, which consumes significant time. For example, if 30 people spend 10% of their time in communication with the entire clinic (4 to 5 hours per week), this consumes three FTE's.

Physics time is expensive, so it is important that it is consumed efficiently and appropriately. There are significant challenges in a large academic practice with the appropriate staffing of clinical physics. This presentation will review in detail how clinical physics time is spent at MDACC and review the implications.