

In the medical use of radiation, another human being is our ultimate focus. The Medical Physicist is responsible for developing and implementing complex technology that is used to deliver medical care aimed at improving the human condition. We are also responsible for establishing and maintaining a quality environment for the procedures and equipment to provide the safest and highest quality patient care. Patient care is what draws us to enter and remain in the profession of medical physics. Illness or a suspected medical condition can be a frightening and life changing event or series of events. As part of the team in the medical use of radiation for diagnosis and the treatment of disease, we strive to make certain that every procedure provides only and exactly the radiation and accurate analysis necessary to carry out the physician's directive to the benefit of the patient. There are many factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful medical care. In some cases, we do not succeed. However, each year millions of individuals receive radiation for diagnostic purposes and hundreds of thousands of people receive radiation therapy and nearly all of them benefit from their procedure(s). At times, medical physicists are removed from the patient's direct experience because we operate behind the scenes and in the development and implementation of the technology used in radiation medicine. This year, the President's symposium focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of disease from the perspective of the patient and his physician. Professor Jim Donnelly is a head and neck cancer survivor and he will relate his unique perspective of the experience from symptoms, through diagnosis and treatment. His physician, Dr. Robert Foote, will provide the doctor's point of view focused on an individual human being. We will see through the patient's eyes how the technology and procedures we develop are perceived and how their use throughout the medical process contributes to the profound impact on everything in Jim's life. This symposium is dedicated to all people who receive medical procedures that involve the technology or expertise provided by medical physicists and it is designed to show us what it means to them.