

## *Ukiah Valley Medical Center*



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### **State-of-the-art Cancer Detection Now Available in Ukiah**

Physicians at Ukiah Valley Medical Center (UVMC) are now able to view cancer in a more precise way, with a state-of-the-art mobile PET/CT scanner.

The new technology enables doctors to more accurately detect cancer and pinpoint its exact location in the body. UVMC is the only hospital in Mendocino County with the new technology.

Both CT (computed tomography) and the newer PET (positron emission tomography) have added valuable dimensions to cancer diagnosis, but each has limitations. A CT scan is a series of X-rays taken sequentially along the length of the body, producing images that resemble cross sections of organs and other structures. CT gives sharp views of anatomical features and differentiates between types of soft tissue, bone, and blood vessels. The technique reveals lesions, tumors, and metastases.

PET scans, meanwhile, focus more on how structures behave than on how they look. They detect the metabolic activity of tissues — how rapidly they are consuming the sugar that fuels biological growth. Cancerous tissue consumes sugar at a high rate, which shows up on PET scans as bright areas. PET can distinguish between dead scar tissue and active cancer, and detect cancers at a smaller, earlier stage than CT. However, PET lacks the power to clearly show those anatomical structures — particularly in the abdomen — that serve as landmarks for doctors in pinning down the tumor's location.

Before the development of the combined PET/CT scanner several years ago, patients would have a CT scan on one machine and a PET on another. Imaging experts would then compare the images, with the CT providing the physical landmarks for precisely locating the PET findings. However, even small body movements or changes in internal organs when switching between scans can reduce the tests' accuracy.

According to UVMC Radiologist Randy Bivens, MD, combined PET/CT scans will greatly decrease the time to diagnose what is or isn't cancer, "Not only will the community have one of the most state-of-the-art cancer detection scans available locally, but we can now diagnose several cancers in minutes compared to days."

“PET/CT also solves another limitation of current cancer care which is the difficulty of quickly assessing how well a therapy is working,” said Bivens. “Expanding the use of PET/CT technology can provide early and accurate assessment of a tumor’s response to a particular therapy allowing physicians to better tailor a patient’s treatment.”

UVMC President & CEO, Mark E. LaRose said, “Having this advanced technology in a mobile configuration allows UVMC to meet community needs by offering a state-of-the-art exam to patients in our region which is otherwise only offered at larger, metropolitan hospitals.”

For more information on PET/CT scanning, contact your physician or call 866-293-3500.

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ATTENTION MEDIA: Photos available upon request.

*Ukiah Valley Medical Center is part of Adventist Health, a not-for-profit, faith-based health system operating in California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington. Founded on the Seventh-day Adventist heritage of Christian health care, Adventist Health is comprised of 20 hospitals with more than 3,100 beds, 18,800 employees, numerous clinics and outpatient facilities, 16 home care agencies and three joint-venture retirement centers. For more information, visit [www.uvmc.org](http://www.uvmc.org) or [www.adventisthealth.org](http://www.adventisthealth.org).*