

Title	Early Prostate Cancer Treatment
Organisation	Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital, Gauteng Department of Health
Innovation	Prostate brachytherapy is a newer approach to treating early prostate cancer relative to the traditional methods – external beam radiotherapy or a radical prostatectomy. The procedure itself has been done in parts of the world since the early 2000's but has not been available in the state sector in Gauteng. This was due to a lack of skills to do these procedures, and the perceived cost of the radioactive sources or "seeds", but with new team members joining radiation oncology, the skills to do these procedures in the public sector now exist. The procedure has been available for patients in the private sector for several years now, but this has now transferred over to the public sector.
Impact	<p>The purpose of the oncology units within the public sector is to ensure that all South Africans who develop cancer have access to oncologic (cancer) treatment. Unfortunately, due to a lack of enough highly skilled staff (radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiotherapists etc.) and treatment equipment, the radiation oncology unit at CMJAH has developed long waiting lists for patients to receive lifesaving and life extending radiotherapy for their cancer. Most severely affected are patients who develop prostate cancer, where the waiting list to receive radiotherapy at CMJAH is 5 years (1000+ patients), and the waiting list to receive surgery at CHBAH is equally long. Most of these patients have advanced cancers, but the early-stage cancer patients have the best prognosis, but unfortunately due to the long waiting lists, may not get treatment until their cancer is less curable or incurable. The prostate brachytherapy program allows these men to get an alternative to traditional external beam radiotherapy or traditional surgery, and it will start to reduce the wait list for patients with prostate cancer to receive treatment. This will increase their chance of cure their cancer. It has also helped to reduce the waiting lists for both radiotherapy and surgery, allowing men not eligible for the procedure to get their treatment quicker.</p> <p>The program was started at CHBAH, as a joint initiative between CMJAH Radiation Oncology(RO), CHBAH Urology with support from BD Africa. At the time, CMJAH was closed due to the fire, so the CMJAH Radiation Oncology department decided to use the opportunity to partner with CHBAH Urology (as there is no Radiation Oncology at CHBAH) to introduce RO there, train their staff, assist with their long prostate cancer wait list, and pilot the project, with the plan of scaling to CMJAH the following year. With now over 50 men treated at CMJAH, and the program started at CMJAH, we envision the program speeding up as more staff become familiar and proficient at doing prostate brachytherapy.</p>