American Board of Radiology Foundation receives grant from Varian Medical Systems for national brachytherapy registry

BOSTON, MA – October 31, 2012 – ASTRO Booth #5019 – The American Board of Radiology Foundation (ABRF) and Varian Medical Systems today announce that Varian is awarding a $100,000 grant to the ABRF to establish a national brachytherapy registry. The new registry, which is the first such nationwide modality-based project in radiation oncology, is linked to the American Board of Radiology’s (ABR’s) Innovation Pathway in Maintenance of Certification (MOC) for Focused Practice Recognition of Brachytherapy.

“The ABRF greatly appreciates this generous donation from Varian Medical Systems,” said Glenn S. Forbes, MD, chair of the ABRF Board of Directors. “This project aligns with the Foundation’s overall mission of demonstrating, enhancing, and continuously improving accountability to the public in the safe and appropriate use of medical imaging and radiation therapy. It promises to greatly enrich our understanding of the use of brachytherapy.” ABR Executive Director Gary J. Becker, MD, also emphasized the importance of the funding from Varian: “Without this grant, the ABR would not have had the resources necessary to establish the new registry, which is crucial to our Focused Practice in Brachytherapy initiative and to our understanding of current practices and outcomes of this important therapeutic modality,” he said.

The initiative is a voluntary component of the existing ABR MOC program and is designed to allow ABR radiation oncology diplomates who are enrolled in MOC and active in brachytherapy practice to achieve an added credential that demonstrates their commitment to quality and safety, expertise, and volume of practice in that modality. Participants must meet the case-mix, data, and volume requirements, as well as additional medical education and self-assessment activities, as noted in detail on the ABR website (www.theabr.org/content/fp-brachy).

“The Focused Practice in Brachytherapy Initiative, made possible by the Varian grant, will have an important national impact on clinical case quality assurance and policy development in radiation oncology,” said Paul E. Wallner, DO, ABR associate executive director for radiation oncology and director, ABR Foundation. “We believe this initiative will also raise the level of brachytherapy visibility, quality, research and training throughout U.S.”
“Varian is pleased to support this initiative, which will enable accrual of important data that could yield useful information for developing evidence-based treatment protocols,” said Kolleen Kennedy, president of Varian's Oncology Systems business. “As a world leader in radiotherapy treatment technology, including systems for planning and delivering low- and high-dose-rate brachytherapy, we are delighted to see the ABR launching this brachytherapy registry.”

Participation will be reported to the public (via the American Board of Medical Specialties www.certificationmatters.org public access site) and will be available to hospital/facility credentialers and payers. Participants will also be able to download documentation of the credential from their ABR Personal Databases (PDBs). Please contact the ABR at fprb@theabr.org with any questions regarding the FPRB program.

Brachytherapy involves the delivery of radiation therapy through the placement of one or more tiny radioactive sources into a tumor or an area of the body where a tumor was surgically removed. The technique is designed to deliver a large dose of radiation to the area while sparing surrounding healthy tissue, sometimes as a primary treatment and sometimes as a boost to external beam radiotherapy treatments. The radioactive sources are placed in or near the tumor through catheters or rigid applicators.

The official check presentation took place at the ASTRO Annual Meeting on October 30, 2012. From left: Paul Wallner, DO, associate executive director for radiation oncology, the American Board of Radiology; Beth Erickson, MD, chair of the ABR Brachytherapy Focused Practice Advisory Committee; and Kolleen Kennedy, president of the Oncology Systems Business, Varian Medical Systems.
The long-term vision of the American Board of Radiology Foundation (ABRF) is to address issues related to uses of medical imaging and radiation therapy and to benefit the public by being a convener and catalyst, as well as a knowledge resource. With a sole commitment to serve the public good and current or past senior leadership representation from every professional entity within the community of diagnostic radiology, radiation oncology, and medical physics, the ABRF provides a special opportunity to collaborate and form broad partnerships with public engagement directed toward issues of common interest.

About Varian Medical Systems
Varian Medical Systems, Inc., of Palo Alto, California, is the world’s leading manufacturer of medical devices and software for treating cancer and other medical conditions with radiotherapy, radiosurgery, and brachytherapy. The company supplies informatics software for managing comprehensive cancer clinics, radiotherapy centers and medical oncology practices. Varian is a premier supplier of tubes, digital detectors, and image processing workstations for X-ray imaging in medical, scientific, and industrial applications and also supplies high-energy X-ray devices for cargo screening and non-destructive testing applications. Varian Medical Systems employs approximately 6,100 people who are located at manufacturing sites in North America, Europe, and China and approximately 70 sales and support offices around the world. For more information, visit http://www.varian.com or follow us on Twitter.