

# New Specialist Offers Interventional Oncology Treatments



James Picotte, MD

**James Picotte, MD**, joined the Medical Staff at Munson Medical Center and Grand Traverse Radiologists in July as one of the group's four Interventional Radiologists. He brings with him extensive training in minimally invasive image-guided oncology treatments.

Picotte completed his internship and residency in Diagnostic Radiology and a fellowship in Interventional Radiology at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich.

Picotte is trained in three minimally invasive techniques not previously offered at Munson Medical Center. Radio-frequency ablation (RFA) – also known as thermal ablation – is used to burn tumors in the liver, lungs, kidneys, bones, or soft tissues. A high-frequency alternating electrical current destroys tissue cells by heating them. The procedure is done percutaneously, using CT or ultrasound.

“This procedure is optimal for patients with a limited number of metastases who are not surgical candidates,” Picotte said. “The goal of the procedure is to cure the disease. Patients spend one night in the hospital. They’re home the next day with minimal recovery time. The procedure can be repeated if there is progression of the disease.”

Picotte also is trained in intra-arterial liver cancer treatments – specifically radioembolization and chemoembolization. These therapies are typically not curative, but can significantly prolong life in patients with inoperable tumors. “These techniques are used in patients who are not candidates for RFA and are not responding to chemotherapy,” he said. “Patients usually have been through one or two cycles of chemotherapy and are not surgical candidates. These treatments can potentially extend survival another 18 to 24 months.”

Originally from the Upper Peninsula near Marquette, Picotte moved north in part to be closer to family. “Traverse City appealed to me because it has a strong radiology group with a

## Chemoembolization

Chemoembolization delivers a high concentration of chemotherapy directly into the tumor through the hepatic artery and also cuts off the blood supply to the tumor, trapping the drugs at the site and depriving the tumor of oxygen and nutrients it needs to grow.

## Radioembolization

Radioembolization uses the hepatic arteries to send tiny spheres filled with Yttrium-90, a radioactive material, directly to the tumor. A catheter is inserted into the femoral artery, and under x-ray guidance, delivered to an artery branching from the hepatic artery, which supplies blood to liver tumors. Normal liver tissue receives most of its blood supply from the portal vein, so it is largely spared. The microspheres release radiation over 10-14 days, delivering a higher dose of radiation than is generally tolerated if delivered through an external beam.

Plans are being developed to offer radioembolization at Munson Medical Center.

solid Interventional Radiology program already up and running,” he said. “I look forward to working with other members of the health care community and the hospital to make these resources available to patients across the region.”

Interventional Radiologists in Picotte's group share call 24/7. “We are open to questions and can discuss other interventional procedures, including those outside of oncology, such as peripheral vascular disease, dialysis interventions, uterine fibroid embolization, and kyphoplasty. We have a fully staffed outpatient clinic where patients can be seen before their procedures and followed up after their procedures.”

An Interventional Radiologist also travels to Mercy Hospital Cadillac every Thursday to see patients and do procedures.

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