

\$2.5 MILLION MACHINE



Workers move pieces of a new radiation machine into the Imperial Valley Cancer Center on Friday morning. ELIZABETH VARIN PHOTO

New technology to fight cancer arrives in Valley

BY ELIZABETH VARIN

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It was a special Cancer Awareness Day for an area oncology center.

Though patients didn't walk the halls of the Imperial Valley Cancer Center on Friday morning, the latest technology was beginning to take shape.

The center began moving in its new RapidArc, an advanced radiotherapy machine, into its facility on La Brucherie Road.

The 2-ton, \$2.5 million machine is the first in El Centro, according to a press release from Vantage Oncology.

RapidArc radiotherapy delivers image-guided intensity-modulated radiation therapy in a single rotation of the treatment machine around the patient, according to the press release.

"The side effects from RapidArc are significantly reduced compared to conventional radiation therapy," said Dr. Edward J. Ordorica, medical director of Imperial Valley Cancer Center, in a statement. "The risk of long-term complications from treatment is also dramatically lower."

The center had previously had the latest technology, but this just advances it more, said Daniel Ortiz, center and marketing manager. It allows for not only a targeted radiation, but also different strengths of radiation depending on the area.

Some areas of the body are more sensitive to radiation, he said. Being able to target areas and levels reduces the treatment time from 45 minutes a day to three minutes.

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Installation of the machine began Friday, and should be completed in a few weeks, Ortiz said. Then the state will have to certify the machine, and it should be ready for use in March.

Until then, patients are being taken to Temecula,

put up in hotel rooms and shuttled to the medical center five days a week, he said. While it's an inconvenience, they will soon be able to return home and get treatment locally, instead of outside the area.

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