# Radiation Oncology Peer Review Guidance Document

## Definition of Radiation Oncology Peer Review
- The evaluation of components of a radiation treatment plan by a second radiation oncologist.

## Qualifying Statements

### Organizational Culture
- Peer review requires an organizational culture that allows and encourages review of physician decisions. However, responsibility of care remains with the attending oncologist and recommendations from peer review will be implemented at his/her discretion.
- All members of the team have a role in informing the peer review process.
- The peer review process is enhanced when it occurs in a multi-disciplinary setting with participation from radiation therapists and medical physicists.

### Functions of Peer Review
- Peer review ensures the treatment plan is appropriate from both safety and effectiveness perspectives through the evaluation of: clinical decision, contours (target, OARs), and dosimetry. For the purpose of this document, review of the clinical decision alone (e.g. at a multidisciplinary case conference) is not sufficient for meeting the criteria for radiation oncology peer-review.
- Secondary functions of peer review include: continuing education, process development and reduction in practice variation, improved outcomes, communication, collaboration, quality improvement, team building.

### Case Selection for Peer Review
- All radiation treatment plans administered with adjuvant or curative intent.
- All radiation treatment plans where there is a significant potential for adverse patient outcome if tumour targets and/or normal structures are treated inappropriately including: conventionally fractionated treatment plans, high dose single fraction plans, brachytherapy plans, and plans with a palliative intent.
- All radiation treatment plans where a specific concern is identified at any point in the planning or treatment process.

### Timing of Peer Review
- Peer review occurs before the start of treatment, but in all cases before 25% of the total prescribed dose has been delivered.
- Additional peer review may occur at any point during treatment as issues/concerns are identified (i.e., CBCT review).

### Documentation and Communication of Peer Review
- The peer review process includes communication of recommendations to the attending oncologist.
- Documentation of peer review may include: that peer review has occurred, recommended changes, outcome of recommendations (i.e., plan changed or plan not changed)
- Documentation may occur in the medical record, the treatment record, or off-line.

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References:

   - MCC Standards
   - MCC Standards: The Evidentiary Review
   - MCC Standards: Standards Development and External Review – Methods and Results

http://www.cancercare.on.ca/toolbox/mcc_tools/