



# Department of Radiation Oncology

## A Message From the Chair

### Kenneth Rosenzweig, MD, Professor and Chair, Department of Radiation Oncology

As the end of 2022 comes near, we reflect on the many contributions of our faculty, our staff, and our entire team devoted to providing the best possible care to our patients. Notably, a team of radiation therapists, leadership, and faculty have marked history in establishing the first Advanced Practice Radiation Therapist role in the United States, and received the first grant to study its impact from the American Society of Radiologic Technologists. Recognized internationally as an integral component of the radiation oncology service model, APRTs have proven to provide solutions to care delivery challenges and enhance the quality of care. While national momentum on advanced practice therapy has increased in the last several years, Mount Sinai is the first to initiate this model in practice and lead this effort nationally. As an institution that prioritizes innovation and quality, our Department is delighted that our patients will benefit from this innovative care model, and that other departments across the country may benefit by collaborating and modeling our efforts. In this special edition newsletter, we highlight the pioneering work of this team. Wishing you all a happy and healthy holiday season and a prosperous new year ahead.



# Research

## Congratulations to a Team Developing Novel Care Solutions Rooted in Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy (APRT)



(From left) Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T), Kavita Dharmarajan, MD, MSc, Clodagh Starrs, MSc, RTT, Danielle McDonagh, MS, RT(T), Maria Dimopoulos, MBA, RT(T)

Danielle McDonagh, MS, RT(T), along with co-investigators Maria Dimopoulos, MBA, RT(T), Clodagh Starrs, MSc, RTT, and Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T), are the recipients of the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) Foundation Research Grant for their project titled, “A pilot study exploring how an APRT process intervention impacts throughput for inpatients referred to radiation oncology at a large US academic medical center.” With mentorship from Kavita Dharmarajan, MD, MSc, and additional support from Sheryl Green, MBBCh, Karyn Goodman, MD, MS, and Lynda Rath, BFA, the team earned the maximum award over two years. ASRT Foundation Research Grants support new ideas and practices to strengthen the radiologic technology profession and help cultivate the next generation of researchers.

This team leads the first research award in the United States on Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy and aims to explore the effectiveness of an Advance Practice Radiation Therapy role in inpatient workflow operations in radiation oncology at The Mount Sinai Hospital. The results of the study will improve access and efficiency to care for our inpatient population receiving radiation therapy treatment. Internationally, the Advance Practice Radiation Therapist role is well recognized and supported by research. The success of this project will provide a seminal study in the United States for future researchers and a foundation for the Advanced Practice Radiation Therapist role to provide care solutions in radiation oncology. Find the ASRT Foundation press release [here](#).

# Professional Development and Achievement



## **Clodagh Starrs, MSc, RTT, Promoted to Advanced Practitioner, Radiation Oncology at The Mount Sinai Hospital**

Clodagh Starrs received her Bachelor of Science degree in Therapeutic Radiography in 2001 from University of Ulster in Jordanstown, Northern Ireland, and has worked at The Mount Sinai Hospital since 2006. She has managed the daily treatment and simulation operations since 2010. Through multidisciplinary collaboration, she has led many clinical initiatives—notably liver breath hold techniques; sensitive practice for breast patients; and advancing the use of Image Guided Radiation Therapy for central nervous system malignancies. She has been invited to share her work at national conferences, has been an ASRT keynote speaker twice, and serves as a preceptor and admissions committee member for the Mount Sinai Center for Radiation Sciences Education.

Clodagh Starrs, MSc, RTT  
Advanced Practitioner  
Radiation Oncology

In August of 2022, she completed her Master of Science degree in Advanced Clinical Practice, Radiation Oncology, at the University of Sheffield in Sheffield, United Kingdom. She participates in the National Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy Working Group and the International Community of Practice, and she established national leadership in advancing the clinical and technical role of the radiation therapist.

In her new position at The Mount Sinai Hospital, she will be the first radiation therapy professional in the United States to hold an Advanced Practice role. At Mount Sinai Radiation Oncology, this includes leading the Department toward improved inpatient radiation treatment services, developing new treatment techniques, and leading research that contributes to radiation medicine, improving patient care, and elevating the knowledge of radiation therapy. Congratulations Clodagh!

## **In Practice**

### **Radiation Oncology Inpatient Radiation Treatment Service**

To improve the care provided, the Inpatient Radiation Treatment Service creates continuity of care for inpatients referred for radiation consult through care coordination organized by Clodagh Starrs, MSc, RTT, and addresses an existing gap in care. By helping patients navigate each step of the inpatient pathway/process, from consult to follow-up, the IPRT service enhances the existing support system for patients through care coordination, patient education, and meeting the psychosocial needs of the patient. It also aims to support physician services to keep up with demands, assume lower-level tasks associated with burnout among providers, including non-billable documentation, and ultimately save physicians time. Piloting the Advanced Practice therapy role, as the first in the United States, with concise quality measurements, research, and guiding enhancements, the APRO provides an inpatient treatment assessment (in addition to the medical assessment) to guide a more thorough simulation and treatment process.

# International Collaboration

## The Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy (APRT) International Community of Practice (iCoP)

Members of the Mount Sinai Health System radiation therapy team represent the United States in the APRT International Community of Practice. With inaugural members representing Australia, Canada, Portugal, the United States and the United Kingdom, the iCoP conducts multi-center projects that will bolster the available evidence on the impact and value of advanced practice radiation therapy around the globe. Led by Natalie Rozanec, MSc, and Nicole Harnett, MS, from Canada, the committee works to explore opportunities that will advance radiation therapy practice, potential, and presence.



Group Photo from Inaugural iCoP Meeting

**Canada:** Carrie Lavergne, Kitty Chan, Natalie Rozanec, Nicole Harnett

**UK:** Yat Man Tsang, Neil Roberts, Sairanne Wickers

**US:** Danielle McDonagh, Samantha Skubish, Clodagh Starrs

**Portugal:** Celeste Oliveira (not in photo)

**Australia:** Mary Job (not in photo), Alison Brown (regrets), Carolyn Sanderson (regrets)

## In Publication

### Radiation Therapy Leaders Advocate and Analyze the Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy Role in *tipsRO*

In March 2021, Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T), Clodagh Starrs, MS, RT(T), and Danielle McDonagh, MS, RT(T), published an article in *Technical Innovations and Patient Support in Radiation Oncology*, titled “Exploring opportunities and pathways for Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy Roles in the United States.” The article reviews the current radiation therapy practice and professional landscape in the United States as it relates to advanced practice and explores opportunities and challenges under the U.S. health care infrastructure. Find the full article [here](#).

# In Publication Continued

## Establishing Innovative Roles in Radiation Therapy Published in *JMIRS*

In December 2022, Maria Dimopoulos, MBA, RT(T), and Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T), published an article in the *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences* (JMIRS) titled "Exploring Approaches to Establishing Innovative Radiation Therapy Roles in the United States." The pair were invited to contribute to a special edition of the journal on leadership. They highlighted their experience collaborating with international colleagues, establishing a state society for radiation therapy, the educational model of the Center for Radiation Sciences Education and the Advanced Practice Radiation Therapist role. Find the full article [here](#).

## National Leadership

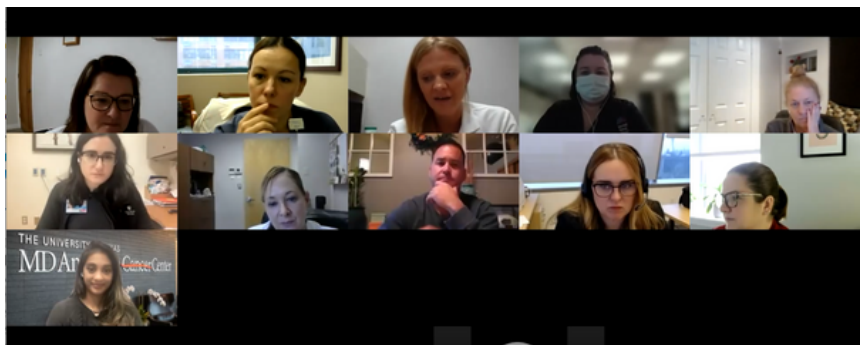
### The National Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy Working Group

The Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy Working Group is a grassroots group of multidisciplinary radiation oncology professionals—therapists, physicians, leadership—across the country interested in studying and establishing an Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy role in the United States. They recognize the value of the APRT to the quality and advancement of clinical care. The group seeks to coordinate activities, align resources, push the national conversation forward, and establish goals in line with the needs of our patients and the profession. Since its kick-off in March of 2021, the group has grown to 30 participants across 25 organizations, led by Mount Sinai leadership. The working group collaborates on publications with the ultimate goal of proving the model of APRT collectively and consistently across the United States. By having one collective voice, the group seeks to make an impact on a broad scale. Thank you to our Mount Sinai team for leading this effort nationally: Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T); Clodagh Starrs, MSc, RTT; Sheryl Green, MBBCh; Kimberly Smith, MPA, FACHE; Karyn Goodman, MD, MS; Maria Dimopoulos, MBA, RT(T); and Danielle McDonagh, MS, RT(T).

Additionally, Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T), and Clodagh Starrs, MSc, RTT, presented at the American Society of Radiologic Technologists Radiation Therapy Conference on "Advanced Practice Radiation Therapy in Your Department - An Exploratory Summary for Planning, Research and Implementation" providing guidance and a roadmap for others interested in establishing APRT in their departments.



2022 ASRT Radiation Therapy Conference



APRT Working Group Meeting Q4, 2021

# Meet the Team



**Kimberly Smith, MPA, FACHE**  
Vice President  
Department of Radiation Oncology



**Sheryl Green, MBBCh**  
Professor and Medical Director  
Department of Radiation Oncology



**Clodagh Starrs, MSc, RTT**  
Advanced Practitioner  
Department of Radiation Oncology



**Samantha Skubish, MS, RT(R)(T)**  
Chief Technical Director  
Department of Radiation Oncology



**Kavita Dharmarajan, MS, MD**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Radiation Oncology



**Danielle McDonagh, MS, RT(T)**  
Clinical Coordinator, Radiation Therapy  
Education and Research  
Center for Radiation Sciences Education



**Lynda Rath**  
Associate Director of Research  
Department of Radiation Oncology

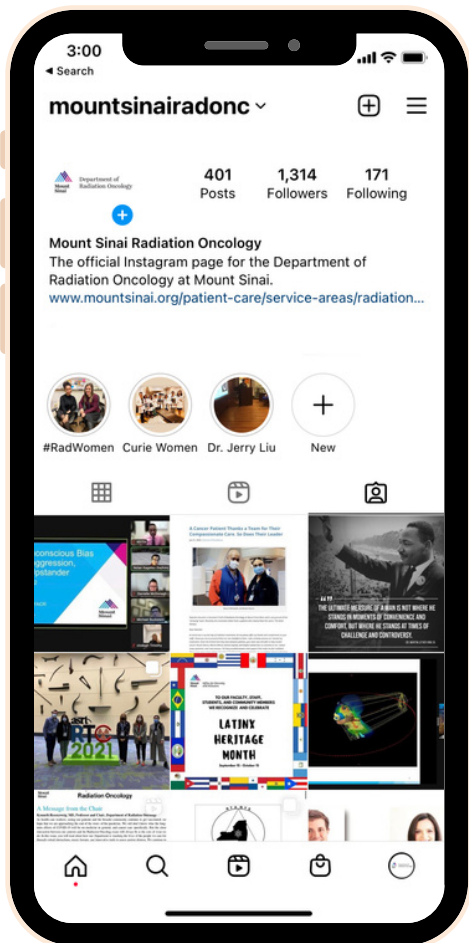


**Maria Dimopoulos, MBA, RT(T)**  
Associate Director  
Center for Radiation Sciences Education



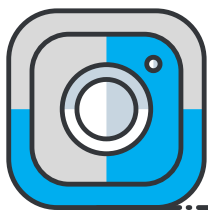
**Karyn Goodman, MD, MS**  
Professor and Vice Chair of Clinical  
Research  
Department of Radiation Oncology

# Department of Radiation Oncology Social Media Platforms



Interested in joining our social media committee? Take a picture we should post?  
Please contact us at

[radoncnews@mountsinai.org](mailto:radoncnews@mountsinai.org)



Follow us on Instagram searching the handles:

[@MountSinaiRadOnc](#)  
[@MountSinaiRTTedu](#)



To learn more about the radiation oncology simulation and treatment process, view our educational video playlist on YouTube by searching

[Mount Sinai Radiation Oncology](#)



Follow our Department and Radiation Oncology Residents on Twitter searching the handles:

[@MountSinaiRO](#)  
[@MSROResidents](#)