



VETERINARY SPECIALTY & EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

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VETERINARY SPECIALTY & EMERGENCY HOSPITAL





SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

SUMMERTIME IN THE MILE HIGH

Summer is finally here, and we are ready for it! With all of the crazy rain that we've been getting, here at VRCC, we welcome the sunshine and the warmer temperatures that are more typical for the Colorado summer season!

This edition of our newsletter highlights our Oncology, Internal Medicine, and Cardiology teams, as well as provides some hospital news and updates.

VRCC Cardiology shares information about their practice, and what they offer for clients & patients. They also introduce some of their newest team members.

Learn more about Dr. Elizabeth Groth, one of our Internists, in the staff highlight section just to the right.

Our case study for this issue was a team effort! Dr. Robyn Elmslie and our two lead oncology technicians, Sadie and Cheryl, share Isabela's story of cardiac hemangiosarcoma with you.

Be sure to check out the VRCC news and announcements section. We welcome a new doctor to our Emergency team, and provide an update on our new radiation building.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you ever need anything. We are so appreciative of the partnership that we share with you in helping to care for mutual patients and their families. Ruby Post, our Referral Liaison, can be reached by calling 303-874-2053, or emailing rpost@vrcc.com.

We hope you have a fun-filled Summer season!

Your VRCC Team

PRACTICE HIGHLIGHT: VRCC CARDIOLOGY

VRCC Cardiology is a fully comprehensive cardiology service. In addition to echocardiography, we offer minimally invasive procedures such as closure of patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), balloon valvuloplasty for pulmonic stenosis, pacemaker implantation, and electrocardioversion. We work closely with the other specialty services in VRCC including Internal Medicine, Emergency and Critical Care, Oncology, and Surgery. We also work closely with our board-certified anesthesiologists who oversee our anesthetic procedures.

We have a few new faces in the VRCC Cardiology Service! In addition to our two board-certified cardiologists (Dr. Julie Martin and Dr. Pamela Lee), cardiology resident (Dr. Erika Pugh), and VTS in cardiology (Ray Zeuner), we have added 4 new team members. Rocio, RVT, joined the team at the end of March. She has been a GP technician with experience with exotics and small animals. Her interests include plants, reading, the outdoors, and spending time with her two dogs Malia and Nala. Sheena, RVT, has 13 years of experience in veterinary medicine. She has experience in general practice, internal medicine, emergency, and critical care. She is excited to be a part of the cardiology team, calling

STAFF HIGHLIGHT: VRCC INTERNAL MEDICINE

***Elizabeth Groth, DVM, MS,
Diplomate ACVIM***

Dr. Elizabeth Groth is a Minnesota native and spent the first 21 years of her life there. She grew up in Rochester and attended college at the University of Minnesota in Duluth where she studied both biology and German studies. She was



fortunate to have attended two short study-abroad programs in Germany during college. She then traveled to Missouri for veterinary school where she was an active member in the Raptor Rehabilitation Project helping to care for and rehabilitate injured wild birds-of-prey. She then traveled to Indiana and Florida for veterinary internships. Dr. Groth ended her educational journey back in Minnesota where she completed her residency and Master's degree. She has been in Colorado and with the VRCC Internal Medicine team since 2018. While she has lived in many places, Colorado has been one of her favorites.

While not at work, Dr. Groth spends time with her husband (also a Minnesota native) and her two cats. She can often be found playing video games with a cat in her lap. Like many in Colorado, she can also be found in the mountains either hiking or camping. She loves to travel, especially to places with good food, beer, and wine. Her and her husband enjoy home brewing and make a mean cream ale in the summers. She enjoys cross-stitch, knitting, and crochet and is a rabid hockey fan (Go Wild!). To many at VRCC, Dr. Groth is known as the "fact of the day" person and often provides "fun facts" that have nothing to do with veterinary medicine.

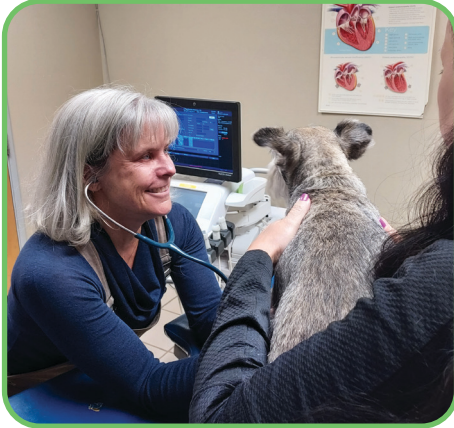
Professionally, Dr. Groth enjoys lower urinary tract diseases and especially bladder stones. She is very excited to be able to bring non-invasive bladder stone removal via laser lithotripsy to VRCC.

To reach the Internal Medicine team, call 303-874-2055, or email: internalmedicine@vrcc.com.



us the heart of the hospital ❤️. In her spare time, she enjoys typical Colorado activities such as hiking, backpacking, and skiing. Olivia, CVT, has 20 years of experience. Her professional background includes exotics medicine, veterinary orthotics and prosthetics, emergency medicine, and neurology/neurosurgery. Olivia is a foodie and loves gardening. Maria is an international student coming from Nicaragua, Central America. She is pursuing a Bachelor's in Creative Technology and Design Engineering at CU

Boulder, achieving 4.0 gpa continuously while immersing herself full-time into the veterinary medicine world. She speaks three languages and enjoys Colorado's outdoor recreation culture.





Dr. Julie Martin listens to a patient's heart


Heart disease can be a stressful and overwhelming diagnosis. At VRCC, we strive to work closely as a team with both our clients and our referring veterinarians. We are always happy to provide no-charge over the phone consults with referring veterinarians or to look at radiographs or ECGs if you have any concerns about referring a case. The VRCC Cardiology Service is typically open Monday through Saturday from 8am to 5pm, with new patient appointments offered all open days. Interventional procedures are scheduled on an as-needed basis.

The VRCC Cardiology Service can be reached by phone at 303-874-2094 or by email at cardio@vrcc.com.

VRCC NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

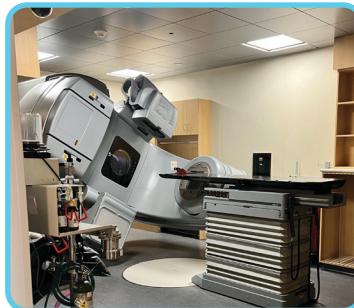
 Make sure we have your email on our list for CE announcements, invites and other important hospital news! Send a message to Ruby Post (rpost@vrcc.com) to get yourself and/or your clinic signed up. Make sure to add vrcc@vrcc.com and rpost@vrcc.com to your 'safe senders' list.

 We would like to welcome Dr. Erin Sunshine to the VRCC Emergency team! Dr. Sunshine will be joining us mid-July. Stay tuned for more doctor announcements coming soon!

 The finishing touches are going on in our new building right now! The new addition, directly west of the main VRCC hospital, is located off of Hampden Ave & River Point Parkway. Our radiation oncology team will be relocating to this facility and using a state-of-the-art radiation administration unit for treatments. The new building also houses an upgraded CT machine for all VRCC patients. Keep an eye on your email for official opening info. In the meantime, please enjoy some pictures of the new facility!



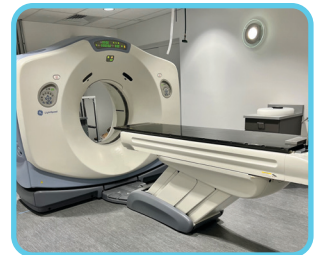
Front of building facing Hampden Ave.



New radiation administration unit



Vault door to radiation treatment room



Upgraded CT



Isabela the Great!



Isabela Hartman is an adorable 9 year old spayed female Beagle. She had been a very healthy dog until a fateful Monday night in January 2022, when she stood up on the bed that she shares with her owners and would not move. With some coaxing, the owners were able to get her to lie down but no one slept that night. When Isabela would not eat breakfast the next morning, the owners headed to the ER for evaluation. Diagnostic testing with the Emergency doctors and Cardiology staff revealed a tumor in the right atrium of the heart measuring 2.5 cm in diameter. The tumor was determined to be causing intermittent bleeding into the pericardial sac, the fibrous sac around the heart, resulting in compression and reduced function of the heart.

Masses in the right atrium of the heart are known to be a form of cancer called hemangiosarcoma. This is a very aggressive cancer with a high probability of continuing to bleed and spread to locations beyond the heart.

Isabela was presented to VRCC Oncology on 2/1/2022 to discuss prognosis and treatment options. The owners were informed that without any treatment, the typical survival time is only 2-4 weeks from diagnosis, due to continued bleeding. Chemotherapy is given to consolidate the tumor, stop the bleeding, improve quality of life and extend survival time. While outcomes vary from one patient to the next, the literature reports

survival times of approximately 6 months with standard chemotherapy protocols. Survival times can be extended when close monitoring of the cancer is done with serial echocardiograms. Serial measurements of the tumor allow for better assessment of the effectiveness of each administered treatment and guide decisions to adjust the treatment protocol. The effectiveness of treatment is therefore optimized when there is a close collaboration between Oncology and Cardiology doctors, as was the case for Isabela.

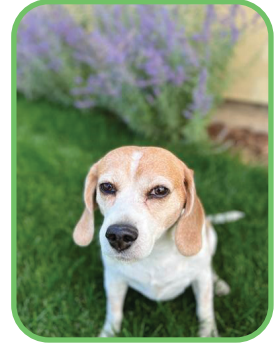
Injectable chemotherapy was initiated with doxorubicin, as part of a standard chemotherapy protocol, resulting in a decrease in the size of the tumor. While regression of the tumor had occurred after the first dose of doxorubicin, progression was noted after the fourth dose. A change in protocol was instituted with the chemotherapy drug carboplatin. Unfortunately, carboplatin was not found to be beneficial and the cancer continued to progress. At this point in Isabela's treatment (April 2022) we made the decision to abandon standard chemotherapy protocols and instead focus on newer therapies that target the tumor microenvironment and mutations within the tumor. Her treatment protocol consisted of a combination of several drugs including trametinib, rapamycin, and a beta blocker.

Isabela experienced a set-back in July 2022 with progression and bleeding of the cancer. She was stabilized by performing pericardiocentesis and administering the intravenous chemotherapy drug vincristine. The oral treatment protocol was adjusted to replace trametinib with toceranib, an oral chemotherapy drug that targets several aspects of the tumor microenvironment. Treatment

with rapamycin and propranolol were continued.

Overall, Isabela has done quite well since last summer. Some dose adjustments have been needed to ensure continued treatment tolerance but the owners report that her quality of life is very good. As we understand more about cancer biology and can closely monitor each patient's response to treatment, we have the opportunity to optimize each patient's outcome. Isabela is due back to see both Cardiology and Oncology for a recheck this August, and we are looking forward to seeing her and her family.

To reach VRCC Oncology, call 303-874-2054, or email: oncology@vrcc.com.



Dr. Robyn Elmslie, DVM
Diplomate ACVIM (Oncology)
VRCC Oncology &
Radiation Therapy



Sadie Watson, BS, CVT
Lead Technician
VRCC Oncology &
Radiation Therapy



Cheryl Henry, BA, CVT
Lead Technician
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