



WORLD WIDE WEB

Web Templates Provide Global Outreach for Local Practices

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IMAGINE IF THERE WAS AN EASY AND LOW-COST WAY to provide basic information to your patients about your practice, yourself and the treatments that you offer at any time of day or night without having to return numerous phone calls or e-mails. For ASTRO members there is.

As a part of all of our membership packages, ASTRO offers basic Web templates that can be personalized and transformed to provide current and potential patients with the information they need when choosing a radiation oncologist, as well as basic facts about treating cancer with radiation.

As of last month, new templates were launched with updated patient information and fresh new designs that are available to ASTRO members free of charge. ASTRO began offering Web templates in early 2005 as a way to help our members promote their practices on the World Wide Web, and, since its inception, hundreds of ASTRO members have taken advantage of this benefit by either using our template or using the information contained on them to highlight their practices and themselves.

One such member is Hasan Murshed, M.D., of Panama City Oncology in Panama City, Fla. Dr. Murshed launched his site (www.PanamaCityOncology.com) late last year to increase his Web presence and provide cancer education tools to his patients and their referring physicians.

"The ASTRO template was well-designed, readily available and much cheaper than hiring someone to design a site for my practice," Dr. Murshed said.

"I felt that the information superhighway was ready and able to advertise my practice to thousands of people, while providing information for my current and potential new patients at the same time."

The template can be accessed from ASTRO's Web site in the Members Media Corner area of the Members Only section. It comes ready made with basic frameworks to choose from, a dictionary of cancer-related terms, links to cancer organizations that can help patients and their families understand their cancer diagnosis, and disease-specific treatment information.

Members have free reign when designing their personal site and can change everything or nothing to suit their own tastes, including choosing colors, which pictures to upload and which preloaded patient information to feature.

For those without tech support, the templates come with their own Web support that can help you with personalizing your page. ASTRO has contracted with the technology vendor Wood Street, Inc., and for a small fee they will work with you to design your ideal page and put the site live on the Internet.

Dr. Murshed's site features the ASTRO-provided treatment information and dictionary, but he also chose to include a bio and curriculum vitae for himself to provide patients with his background before they even walk through the doors of his office.

"I believe that my bio and the patient treatment information are the most important aspects of my Web site because they provide essential informa-

tion to assist the patient in choosing a radiation oncologist and in understanding cancer treatments," Dr. Murshed said. "I give all of my patients a handout with my Web address on it and I put my Web address on all of my printed material because I think it is very important for the patients to have access to this information."

Some unique features of Dr. Murshed's site include videos of local television interviews he has conducted on cancer issues, patient testimonials, a schedule of talks Dr. Murshed will be giving, the latest news from his practice, a list of clinical trials taking place at Panama City Oncology and the latest news in cancer treatments from across the country.

Dr. Murshed also said that he updates his site regularly to keep the information about his practice current for his patients.

According to Dr. Murshed, the time it took to design his site was well worth it based on the benefits he receives from having his practice's information on the Internet.

"I've received a lot of feedback from my patients on the Web site," Dr. Murshed said. "Most of them love the idea that they can access information about the practice so easily and that they can also e-mail me with questions. In the future I plan to make my Web site interactive so that I can offer online scheduling, patients can fill out registration forms online from home before office visits and so that I can survey my patients' and referring physicians' satisfaction."