

killed with heat. Today, not only have they made enormous strides in treating liver tumors, they are using the same technique for kidney, breast, bone and other cancers.

When it comes to the best practices for safely performing minimally invasive medicine, interventional radiologists pioneered the procedures and the standards for safety and quality. First, these procedures are performed by specialists with an in-depth foundation in diagnostic radiology. In addition, patient safety was incorporated into the development of these advances because interventional radiology and diagnostic radiology training programs include radiation safety, radiation physics, the biological effects of radiation, and injury prevention.

The Society of Interventional Radiology (SIR) publishes guidelines for minimally invasive medicine, including criteria for adequate training for specific interventional procedures, as well as expected success and complication rates. These evidence-based guidelines are used by the FDA, hospitals, and state regulatory groups and can be found at the Web site www.SIRweb.org.

Interventional Radiologists The Best Kept Secret in Medicine

According to a national survey, only three percent of Americans are aware of interventional radiologists (Riley Research Associates, 2001). Modern, minimally invasive treatments are available for many diseases, but few patients know to ask about them, or to seek out a second opinion from an interventional radiologist.

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contact with this specialty.

Because surgery was the only treatment available for many years, many primary care physicians still refer their patients to surgeons and rely on the surgeon to provide the consult on available treatment options. However, surgeons are generally poor gatekeepers for knowing the minimally invasive treatments that another specialty offers. Eventually this paradigm will change and patients will be sent to the least invasive practitioner for

