commercial, and local investigator initiated phase I, II, and translational trials. In April 2007, the NICCTU was awarded Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre status, in recognition and support of the Unit's contribution to high quality clinical research in this arena.

In 2007, the NICCTU expanded to include the Northern Ireland Clinical Research Network [Cancer] (NICRNC), which is responsible for the coordination of cancer clinical trial activity throughout Northern Ireland. As one of four U.K.-based national cancer research networks, the NICRNC's portfolio of approximately 250 trials is centrally coordinated through the NCRN in Leeds, England. Annually, the NICCTU recruits approximately 700 patient cases, 8.2% of which involve incident cancers other than non-melanoma skin cancers. Although the NICCTU accrues patients into trials from throughout Northern Ireland, all activities have been based in the CCRCB at QUB. This currently includes the Belfast City Hospital and the Royal Group of Hospitals, which is comprised of the Royal Victoria Hospital and the RBHSC. The CR-UK and HSC R&D Office have jointly funded the formation of the NICRNC to facilitate equitable and convenient access to clinical trials for cancer patients throughout Northern Ireland. Dedicated clinical research nurses have been appointed at each of the four Cancer Units in Altnagelvin Area Hospital, Antrim Area Hospital, Craigavon Area Hospital, and Ulster Hospital in Dundonald. This clinical research expansion will bring equity of service to patients throughout Northern Ireland and will increase patient accrual and clinical trial capacity and activity.

As part of the CCRCB, the NICCTU works closely with other academic groups, universities, and hospitals and maintains strong national and international links. Key collaborators include ICORG, CR-UK, NCRN, Medical Research Council, European Organisation for the Research and Treatment of Cancer, NCI, ECOG, NSABP, and a variety of other U.S. cooperative groups and biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**Professor Donal Hollywood, Chair**

The Information Technology Working Group (IT WG) is committed to building new technological capabilities that promote communication among the three partnering Consortium jurisdictions and to developing enhanced information and sharing methods that benefit everyone. The IT WG also works to facilitate training and education, support the coordination of clinical trials, ensure effective data management, and promote health care delivery systems across the island of Ireland.

### ■ TELESYNERGY®

The TELESYNERGY® system, developed by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Center for Information Technology, is a multimedia medical imaging system that augments the Consortium partners' abilities to collaborate on a variety of projects and activities across the island of Ireland and throughout the U.S.

In November 2007, the TELESYNERGY® Lite system was installed at one site in Ireland, Waterford Regional Hospital. The network now consists of the following:

- A national hub, based at the Academic Unit of Clinical and Molecular Oncology and Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Ireland.
- Four major sites in Ireland at TCD, St. Luke's Hospital, Cork University Hospital, and University College Hospital Galway and one site in Northern Ireland at Belfast City Hospital.
- Two "Lite" systems in Ireland, at Letterkenny Regional Hospital and Waterford Regional Hospital.

By late 2008, TELESYNERGY® will also be installed at Beaumont Hospital in Dublin and TELESYNERGY® Lite will be deployed at Midwestern Regional Hospital in Limerick.

The TELESYNERGY® network facilitates the following conferences, meetings, and educational activities:

- Inter-hospital meetings for tumor boards operating at locations within the four designated regions of the newly-developed National Cancer Control Programme.
- Strategic planning meetings for the tumor site-specific groups within ICORG. This has enabled wide participation of many clinical groups in clinical trial design and discussion.
- Professional committee meetings of the Irish Institute of Radiography and Radiation Therapy.
- Education modules of the Part I Fellowship in Radiation Oncology national training program. This activity will be expanded over the next two years following the recent completion of the accreditation review of the training scheme.
- The "Invited Lecturer/Professor" program supported by the Academic Unit of Clinical and Molecular Oncology at TCD.

The TELESYNERGY® network has also enabled the collaborative development of educational programs. For example, the Dublin, Belfast, and Cork Oncology Centers are now linked via TELESYNERGY® and are working to establish a cross-border shared teaching program for undergraduate students completing the TCD Bachelor of Science (Honors) degree in Radiation Therapy. In addition, TELESYNERGY® has facilitated development of distance learning modules for the Faculty of Radiology Fellowship in Diagnostic Radiology post-graduate program.

During 2007, the Division of Radiation Therapy at TCD completed two research projects geared towards examining the TELESYNERGY® system. One study employed a novel methodological approach to investigating the standardization of the system's image quality and a separate project analyzed user group experience with TELESYNERGY®. The system was also highlighted at several conferences and meetings in 2007, including the European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology annual scientific meeting, the 1st European X-Knife conference, the 10th European Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (ECSCW), and the Health Informatics Society of Ireland conference:

- Kane B, Luz S. (2007, September). "*Passing responsibility for patient care. Workshop on Handover: Collaboration for Continuity of Work.*" Presented at 10th ECSCW.
- Cameirano S, Kane B, Luz S. (2007, September). "*Mobile annotation and recording at multidisciplinary medical team meetings.*" Presented at 10th ECSCW.
- Kane B, Luz S. (2007, November). "*Support for Multidisciplinary Team Meetings.*" Presented at Health Informatics Society of Ireland.

**Enhanced Computing Support for Multidisciplinary Medical Team Meetings**

As TELESYNERGY® expands across the island of Ireland, public health professionals continue to search for new ways to exploit the accessibility and flexibility that advanced technology affords. For example, Dr. Saturnino Luz from the TCD Department of Computer Science has pioneered the Enhanced Computing Support for Multidisciplinary Medical Team Meetings (ECOMMET) project. In collaboration with the TCD Centre for Health Informatics, the School of Radiation Therapy, the Academic Unit of Clinical and Molecular Oncology, and the Computational Bioscience and Engineering Laboratory at the NIH, Dr. Luz and his colleagues are exploring the human and technological issues associated with building advanced computing support for collaboration, production, and access of electronic medical records at multidisciplinary team meetings. Science Foundation Ireland will be funding ECOMMET through 2009.

TELESYNERGY® workstation