

For Immediate Release

PetCure Oncology at AVO Highlights Pet Heroes for National Pet Cancer Awareness Month
Cancer is the leading cause of death in older dogs and cats

Gilbert, AZ – November 17, 2015 – Jill MacKenzie spends her days helping veterinary professionals treat pets with cancer, but her personal and professional lives intersected unexpectedly when her nine-year-old Goldendoodle, Bella, was diagnosed with a soft tissue sarcoma last month.

Now, Bella is officially a [PetCure Pet Hero](#) after undergoing a new treatment option called [stereotactic radiosurgery](#) (SRS) that was delivered by [PetCure Oncology at Arizona Veterinary Oncology](#) (AVO). She received her three treatments on consecutive days and immediately returned home.

SRS is an advanced form of radiation therapy that is widely used in human cancer treatment and offers tremendous benefits. It is now being introduced to veterinary medicine for the first time at specialty animal hospitals like AVO. Delivered with the intent to **cure**, SRS is a non-invasive, non-surgical treatment that delivers high doses of radiation with sub-millimeter precision to maximize damage to tumorous tissue while minimizing collateral damage to nearby healthy tissue. As a result, SRS requires only 1-3 treatment sessions – an 80-95% reduction compared to conventional radiation therapy – and significantly reduces both the severity and duration of side effects.

“Given what I know, having Bella go through only three SRS treatments was absolutely the best option for her,” said MacKenzie, the local Program Director for the PetCure Oncology at AVO partnership. “There have been no side effects. She still acts the same. She ate, took her walks... she was very much the same dog when she came home.”

While Bella needed just three treatment sessions of SRS, a surgical approach would have been followed by 19 treatment sessions (fractions) – including 19 anesthetic episodes – of conventional radiation therapy. Reducing this number so drastically has a powerful impact on the safety and comfort of the pet. That proved to be a key factor in MacKenzie’s decision.

“Determining the best treatment course is not a simple process,” she said. “I thought about it, and there are definitely situations that call for conventional radiation therapy. But the fact that Bella was a candidate for SRS made it a pretty easy decision for my family.”

November is [Pet Cancer Awareness Month](#), the perfect time to cheer those like Bella currently battling cancer, celebrate those who have survived, and pay tribute to those who have passed on.

[PetCure Oncology](#) is revolutionizing cancer care for pets by partnering with established veterinary specialty practices and establishing a national network of centers that specialize in the delivery of advanced radiation therapy and SRS. [AVO](#), located at 86 W. Juniper Avenue in Gilbert, is the only provider of veterinary SRS in the state of Arizona. Locations in [Cincinnati](#) and [Clifton, NJ](#) are also in operation. Sites in Wisconsin and Illinois are slated to open in the next few months, with many more in various stages of development across the country. To learn more or obtain a referral, call 480.635.1110 or visit [PetCureOncology.com](#).

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