

DO PHYSICS.

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UNC PHYSICS



Ted Steger did.

Ted Steger, a 1998 UNC physics graduate, owes his career as a radiation physicist to an internet search engine.

He had just finished his junior year and thought it was time to set his sights on a career. He searched for “physics careers” and a list on an American Physical Society page popped up. The first career on the list was medical physicist.

While getting a Ph. D. in medical physics, Steger researched how Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machines could be used to study brain blood flow, which sometimes can eliminate the need for invasive procedures. When he landed his first job with GE Healthcare, Steger handled computer programming of MRI scanners to develop more efficient and novel ways of imaging the human body.

Now as a radiation physicist at a hospital, he works with radiologists and oncologists to make

sure the radiation prescribed for patients is what comes out of the machine. It’s also Steger’s job to manipulate the radiation doses so that tumors get high amounts of radiation and low doses go everywhere else. Steger says it’s nice to see the people who benefit from his work.

“It’s always a new problem to solve and it requires pretty quick problem solving,” Steger said. “You have a patient on the table and something strange happens, and we are first line of defense to figure out what happened and why. I’ve always been at least one step removed from end user — the person your research or work matters to. Here I am not. You see the people you are helping and that is incredibly motivating.”

If you want to know more about the connection between medicine and physics, contact Ted Steger at tsteger@gmail.com

Looking for more information on medical physics? Check out

http://www.aapm.org/medical_physicist/default.asp

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