In 2014, Eugene Woltering received what he called a once in a lifetime opportunity – serving as chair of the neuroendocrine tumors expert panel for the American Joint Committee on Cancer’s Cancer Staging System, 8th Edition.

When the edition was published three years later, Woltering was proud of the work he and his team did to add imaging, biomarkers and genetics into the Tumor Node Metastasis staging system, improving specific prognoses of cancer in patients and thereby leading to better recommended treatments.

“It was an honor to lead such a prestigious group to lay a foundation for medical professionals to better understand how tumor staging is a dynamic, changing process rather than a static event,” Woltering said. “There was never a staging criteria previously for neuroendocrine tumors.”

Woltering, who has been with LSU Health Sciences Center School of Medicine for close to 30 years, said the Center has the ability “to take clinical problems, send them to the lab for research and then bring those innovations back for better treatment methods.”

Woltering recalls it being among the first to employ PRRT, a molecular targeted therapy used to treat neuroendocrine tumors in which high doses of radiation are sent to tumors in the body to destroy or slow their growth.

“It acts like a smart bomb to cook the tumor by radiation; we were among the first to use it then on about 135 cancer patients a year, and now we’re doing it about eight times a week,” Woltering said. “Our innovative ways have led to local advances in cancer research, staging, diagnosis and treatment.”

— Tommy Santora