

The Cancer Center Newsletter

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ISSUE
2010

Resources of the NYHQ Cancer Center

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Director, Surgical Oncology and Associate Director, Cancer Center

Coordinated Compassionate Care

A diagnosis of cancer is often overwhelming to patients. It can take a dramatic physical toll on patients' bodies. However, the mental and emotional demands of this serious illness can be just as difficult. The New York Hospital Queens Cancer Care team recognizes that the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer extend beyond the physical needs of the patient. We are fully accredited by the American College of Surgeons to provide coordinated, compassionate care for patients and their families. The New York Hospital Queens Cancer Center offers a range of support programs to help patients and their families cope with the challenges of a cancer diagnosis. Through counseling, support groups and educational programs, we strive to promote better understanding, hope and healing. A listing of some of these important programs is provided in the following pages.

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A higher level of cancer care.
Right here in Queens.

THE
CANCER CENTER

member
NewYork-Presbyterian
Healthcare System
affiliate: Weill Cornell Medical College

Dattatreyyudu Nori, M.D.,
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of Cornell University.

Resources of the NYHQ Cancer Center

Educational Programs

Through our weekly multi-disciplinary conferences, area physicians collaborate in evaluating cases, developing treatment plans, and sharing the knowledge and experience it takes to consistently deliver the kind of patient-focused, compassionate care that is the hallmark of the NYHQ Cancer Center. This dynamic team of experts meets regularly and critically discusses and evaluates individual breast, gastrointestinal, gynecological, head and neck, and lung cancer cases. A consensus is generated that outlines a plan of care.

NYHQ health outreach has also joined forces with the NYC Flushing Library's "Cancer Action Council." The council is made up of community leaders and volunteers who use their local resources to plan health activities to meet the needs of their specific community. Through this council, NYHQ will be providing preventive health lectures by our nurses, doctors, physician assistants and outreach workers at the library, as well as offering our screening services at health fairs arranged by the council.

Our commitment to delivering excellence extends beyond the classroom. The physicians at The NYHQ Cancer Center participate in clinical research in an attempt to advance medical care. This research also allows our patients to have access to the newest, most progressive treatment options available today.

Cancer Support Groups

We at the NYHQ Cancer Center recognize the value of support groups in helping patients and their families. In addition to continuously developing and facilitating a wide range of its own support groups, the center provides a meeting place for established support groups arranged through the American Cancer Society, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Smoking Cessation Support Group

This group meets the first Thursday of every month at 11am in the Radiation Oncology Conference Room. There are two nurses trained through the American Lung Association, who facilitate management of this support group.

We have also partnered with "Sabemos," a program sponsored by the Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to raise awareness in the

Hispanic/Latino Community on the effects of secondhand smoke. This is being utilized in our pediatric clinic, to teach our parents how secondhand smoke can affect them and their children.

Where There's a Need: An answer for hair loss from cancer

Where There's A Need Inc. is a non-profit charitable corporation which designs and manufactures special hair scarves with attached bangs for women and children who experience hair loss from cancer and chemotherapy. NYHQ has been a past recipient of both scarves and gifts for our cancer patients. This past year, this organization donated basketball tickets at Madison Square Garden for our patients.

Road to Recovery

Through the Road to Recovery program, cancer patients never have to worry about how they will get to and from their medical appointments. Trained volunteer drivers take the worry out of transportation by providing free rides for patients and their caregivers. Road to Recovery drivers donate their time and use their personal vehicles to transport patients.

Reach to Recovery

This 40-year-old program features breast cancer survivors reaching out to share their experience with others facing the same diagnosis. Through face-to-face visits or by phone, volunteers provide support at every stage in the process, from potential diagnosis, to diagnosis, treatment and ongoing care.

Look Good, Feel Better

Look Good, Feel Better teaches beauty tips to help women undergoing cancer treatment look good and feel better about how they look. Through group workshops or one-on-one consultations, women learn about makeup, skin care, nail care and ways to deal with hair loss such as with wigs, turbans and scarves. Each woman gets a free makeup kit to use during and after the workshop.

All American Cancer Society (and The Lymphoma/Leukemia) programs are free to New York Hospital Queens Cancer Center patients and their caregivers. For more information on the American Cancer Society, please call them at **1-800-ACS-2345** or visit their website at **www.cancer.org**. (The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society can be reached at **(212) 376-7100** or via their website at **www.lls.org**)

Nutrition/Dietary

Dietary counseling is important in the care of our patients. That is because the illness itself, as well as its treatments, may affect a patient's appetite. Additionally, the cancer treatments one receives may also alter the body's ability to tolerate certain foods. Our staff Oncology Dietitian is Oscar Salazar, R.D., and our nutritionist is Jack Pasquale, M.D. Both have conducted several well-received community presentations on cancer nutrition and have received high praise from their patients.

Outpatients who need individualized nutritional therapy can call 718-670-2550 or 718-465-0441 to arrange an appointment.

Patient Care Coordinators/Navigators

To ensure coordinated delivery of patient care, the Breast Center offers patients access to a Patient Navigator. The Navigator provides support from the point of diagnosis through the entire continuum of care and works in conjunction with the physician to review, educate, implement and evaluate services that will complement the patient's care plan. The Patient Navigator creates awareness for patients and their families about community resources and educational programs.

Psychiatric Support

In an attempt to provide direct consultation and ongoing mental health care to our patients at the NYHQ Cancer Center, Jill Myer, M.D. is available for consultation. She has served as a consultation liaison for the past 15 years and has extensive experience in Geriatric Psychiatry. She has worked with cancer patients, their families, friends, and significant others in an effort to help them cope with the patient's illness, treatment and recovery. Her goal is to facilitate education, communication, and collaboration with the oncologists, physician assistants, nurses, social workers, and other health-care providers in the recognition and treatment of the psychosocial needs of our patients. She can be reached at 718-464-0011.

Genetic Counseling

The NYHQ Cancer Center's Genetic Counseling service provides services to individuals and families who may be at high risk for a hereditary cancer syndrome. While the majority of cancer occurs by chance, approximately 7–10% of cancers occur because of a gene mutation that is inherited from a parent. Pre-test genetic counseling with a board certified genetic counselor and physician helps to determine the likelihood of such a syndrome, and will provide an opportunity for patients to learn about the benefits and limitations of genetic testing. Those who choose to undergo genetic testing will also have post-test genetic results counseling, at which point the specialists will provide test interpretation and a management plan for early cancer detection and risk reduction.

For more information, please call 718-670-2110.

Palliative Care Service

This service focuses on assessment of symptoms, aggressive symptom management, quality of life and relief of suffering in patients who have potentially life-threatening illnesses and end of life issues.

For more information, please call 718-670-1097.

Patient and Family Information Room (books, resources, videos and brochures to be read and borrowed)

Our educational reference material can be accessed at our Health Outreach Center. It is located at 57–15A Main Street, one block south of the hospital, directly across from the car wash. Our new "Senior's Corner" is designed to provide seniors with current information on health issues, local activities, and resources available. Seniors are invited to stop by anytime to say hello and obtain this valuable information... and they do!

"Once you choose hope, anything's possible."

—Christopher Reeve



Berlin Lee, American Cancer Society Patient Navigator with Jessie Lau, MA, Director, Patient & Family Services, Eastern Division Asian Initiatives, American Cancer Society.

New Patient Navigator from the American Cancer Society Asian Initiatives at NYHQ

Berlin Lee is a new volunteer Patient Navigator who has gone through the American Cancer Society’s Eastern Division Patient Navigator Training Program. As a part of this training, he spent time at Maimonides Medical Center’s Cancer Center and at Bellevue Hospital. He has been a volunteer Patient Navigator at the St. Vincent Comprehensive Cancer Center for several months. He will be available one day a week initially and start in the Arnold Center for Radiation Oncology. Eventually, he and other volunteer Patient Navigators will also be available in other departments of the NYHQ Cancer Center.

Mr. Lee is a first generation Chinese American who has lived in the United States for 37 years. He is a resident of Queens, and is fluent in several Chinese dialects. Mr. Lee is a prostate cancer survivor and went to the American Cancer Society’s Eastern Division Asian Initiatives for support services and informational resources. While there, he found out about the Patient Navigator Program and decided to become a Navigator so that he could help others facing cancer.

CANCER CENTER CLINICAL PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

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Radiation Therapy Safety

During recent months there have been a series of articles in the *New York Times* describing situations in which patients undergoing Radiation Therapy have had horrible outcomes due to critical malfunctions or procedural errors that occurred during their treatment. A very few hospitals across the country, including in the New York area, were cited as the places where these errors occurred.

Several organizations and individuals have tried to put the articles in perspective. In his open letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, the president of the American Society for Radiation Oncology, Tim Williams, M.D., noted that though any medical error is a serious issue, there were over 13.6 million treatments done in New York in the period of time referred to in the *Times* articles. The number of errors in New York discussed in the articles represents a small fraction of one percent of the treatments performed.

Organizations involved in developing guidelines for cancer care all recognize the invaluable part that Radiation Therapy plays in the treatment of cancer. For example, The American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer has issued several treatment protocols in which Radiation Therapy is an integral part of the treatment plan.

The Arnold Center for Radiation Oncology at NYHQ has many mechanisms in place to ensure that the types of situations that occurred at other hospitals, as written about in the *Times* articles, do not occur here. These procedural and other measures are generally described below.

First, no patient treatment begins without a definitive identification of the right patient and treatment site. Two forms of identification, including a patient picture, are always used. Treatment does not proceed until the treatment site and treatment prescription are programmed into the computer based Record and Verify system. Medical physicists verify that the treatment parameters in the treatment planning system match those in the Record and Verify treatment system. As an additional check, Radiation Therapy technologists compare what is written as the appropriate treatment for the patient in the medical record to what is indicated as the treatment on the computer at the treatment machine prior to treatment initiation. Also, there are weekly checks of the amount of radiation being administered to each patient by the medical physicists.

The *Times* articles discussed a particular problem with a patient at another organization providing Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT). The patient received too much radiation. At the Arnold Center, an IMRT QA is done on each and every patient. With an IMRT QA, the actual treatment that is given is simulated before the patient is treated. This simulation is done as if the patient were there—any problems, including mechanical and software glitches caused by the treatment plan would show up in this simulation. Also, as with all patients, the technologists at the machine monitor each treatment carefully and can visually see if there is some mechanical problem with the IMRT mechanism.

Treatment equipment is calibrated in accordance with national guidelines, and there is ongoing periodic preventive maintenance.

To ensure patient and family involvement, the patient and family are told what to expect, and about the potential side effects of radiation before treatment begins. The patient speaks to his/her technologist every day about how he/she feels, and to a nurse and his/her doctor at least once a week.

TUMOR BOARDS/PATIENT CARE CONFERENCES

The **Department of Radiation Oncology** has **New Patient Conferences** every Tuesday morning at 8 a.m.

Breast Tumor Board is held on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch is served. Next upcoming dates are April 14th and 28th.

Thoracic Tumor Board is on the third Wednesday of every month from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Next date is April 21st.

Gyn Tumor Board is held on the first Wednesday of every month from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Next upcoming date is April 7th.

General Tumor Board is held every Tuesday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. There is one Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit awarded per each Tumor Board meeting attended.

All the above noted professional educational programs are held in the **Anerena M. Anextis Conference Room** in the **Department of Radiation Oncology**. Refreshments are served.

PATIENT SUPPORT GROUPS

The American Cancer Society sponsors a **“Man-to-Man”** program for **prostate cancer** patients, which is held on the second Wednesday of every month from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The American Cancer Society sponsors a **“Look Good-Feel Better”** program for **female cancer patients undergoing Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy** on the second Monday of every month from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The above two programs are held in the Anerena M. Anextis Conference Room in the Department of Radiation Oncology at NYHQ. To register, please call 1-800-ACS-2345.

SMOKING CESSATION SUPPORT GROUP

Held the first Thursday of every month at 11 a.m. in the Anarena M. Anextis Conference Room in the Department of Radiation Oncology at NYHQ. For further information, contact the NYHQ Department of Health Outreach at 718-670-1211.

nyhq.org

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member
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