

Spotlight

Cancer news and information from the Cancer Care Center of York County

Partnerships

Support from a Generous Community!



Executive Director's Message

The Cancer Care Center of York County is the result of a strong commitment and partnership of three hospitals – Maine Medical Center, Southern Maine Medical Center and Goodall Hospital. Prior to opening March 2, 2006, residents either had to go out of state or travel to Scarborough for treatments – a trip of more than 25 miles for many.

I work closely with our many partners – the three hospitals that spearheaded the center as well as Spectrum Medical Group and Maine Center for Cancer Medicine. We have many community partners, to name only a few: American Cancer Society, Maine Cancer Foundation, 211,

and York County Community Action Program who provide transportation and other essential resources to patients and families in York County.

As the new executive director, I am often asked what is unique about the Center. We understand that cancer touches virtually every aspect of our patients' lives as well as the lives of family members. With that in mind, we are continuing to develop a variety of services to assist our patients. Our business community has been very generous and we will continue to partner with a variety of organizations.

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Meet Dr. Can “John” Ilyas, Medical Oncologist and Hematologist



Clinical trials here at the Cancer Care Center are geared to meet community needs that are determined by Maine Center for Cancer Medicine (MCCM)

physicians. There is discussion from a variety of perspectives before a specific Clinical Trial is approved by Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Maine Medical Center/MaineHealth.

We typically have around 30 open, active trials here. Current trials include the most common types of cancer in our communities, such as breast, lung, prostate, kidney, colorectal, head and neck, lymphoma, melanoma, and pancreatic cancer. The majority are Phase III, which are randomized trials to determine if an experimental drug is effective or not.

None of our patients ever gets only placebo in treatment trials unless the standard treatment is “watch and wait.” In our randomized clinical trials, patients either receive an experimental drug, standard treatment, or a combination of both.

Each trial has specific requirements; each is very unique. The first step is to determine the eligibility of the patient. Then we ask the patient if they are interested in participating. If they are, they sign a consent form. Most patients who choose to participate get significant personal benefits:

- if a new drug is proven to work, trial participants may be the first to benefit
- they can experience a new drug not yet available on the market
- they can contribute to our knowledge base and expand their individual treatment to impact future patients and society
- even if they don't receive the experimental drug, and are part of the randomized control group that is receiving standard treatment, they are followed very closely and receive the highest level of monitoring and care

Perhaps most important for our patients is that these clinical trials are available locally – even the lab work



and imaging studies that often accompany participation in clinical trials is available nearby. The convenience of not having to travel is a real benefit and something our patients and their families really appreciate. They tell us it cuts down tremendously on their stress and anxiety.

We always try to find the most appropriate and effective treatment for each of our patients.

Executive Director's Message

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For example, during the annual American Cancer Society Daffodil Days, we had local speakers who offered complimentary presentations on nutrition counseling, yoga, Reiki, and massage – to name just a few.

The quality and compassionate care provided exists as a result of that partnership. We are supported by a much larger healthcare system – the combination of all services of care offered throughout the state. The Center and all the partners support the mission of providing our community with a full spectrum of seamless quality care to individuals and families in an environment that embraces all aspects of cancer care survivorship.

Meet Kay McClaine, breast cancer survivor and volunteer

Since August 2007, I've had the privilege of volunteering here at the Cancer Center. I was here on opening day, and I'm the very first volunteer!



I work in the front area where I can meet and talk with patients as they arrive for treatment. Often our conversation has nothing to do with cancer – I grew up in the Springvale/Sanford area, and it's fun to discover those local connections and reminisce about old times.

But just as often, people do want to talk about their diagnosis and treatment. It's nice to have someone to talk to and to ask questions. I would say that my work as a volunteer is all about making it be a comfortable experience while at the same time respecting people's privacy.

Patients tell me that the lobby area feels like being in someone's living room. We've got the fireplace going in the winter, jigsaw puzzles we can work on together, hot and cold beverages, and cookies and crackers – even oatmeal.

Outside of my work at the Cancer Center, I am the York County Coordinator for the American Cancer Society's Reach for Recovery. We match survivors with patients who find it helpful and reassuring to talk to someone who has been in the same boat. I think it gives them hope to see us survivors, living a good life many years after cancer treatment.

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The Cancer Care Center of York County provides state-of-the-art medical oncology and radiation treatment in a beautiful facility equipped with the most advanced technologies. A collaboration of Goodall Hospital, Maine Medical Center and Southern Maine Medical Center, the Center is staffed by oncologists from Spectrum Medical Group and the Maine Center for Cancer Medicine.