

PROFILE

Frederick Memorial Healthcare System's Comprehensive Cancer Program

A Hospital's Second Century of Service

Frederick Memorial Hospital's cancer program began in 1976, when a cooperative cancer care clinic was established with Johns Hopkins' Hospital.

Because there was no oncologist located in rural Frederick, Md., at the time, a specialist from Baltimore's Johns Hopkins came one day each month to serve as a consultant. The outpatient chemotherapy clinic was started one year later, and the cancer program has grown steadily ever since.

The Regional Cancer Therapy Center opened in 1989 and represents an important milestone in Frederick Memorial's longstanding commitment to provide quality cancer care and to aid efforts to find a cure for the disease. Since that time, the cancer program has been ranked as one of the top 100 in the United States by *Coping Magazine*. And, in 2002, the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer recognized the cancer program as a Comprehensive Community Cancer Program, an honor only 30 percent of hospitals in the nation achieve. Two medical oncology practices, with a total of five medical oncologists, currently participate in the cancer program.

The facility is open throughout the day, but not on a 24-hour schedule, and is conveniently located directly across the street from the hospital with ample parking.

Gregory Rausch, M.D., medical oncologist, said, Frederick Memorial's cancer program prides itself on its active involvement and participation in clinical research, its personalized patient education program, and on having a terrific facility that is very patient friendly.

"We are always trying to improve

our multidisciplinary team approach to cancer care at Frederick Memorial," Rausch said.

For example, a special multidisciplinary breast conference meets every other week. At this conference, members of the team review all abnormal mammograms in which a biopsy is recommended.

They review the case, the pathology, look at the estrogen receptors, and make treatment recommendations specific to that individual patient. A similar multidisciplinary conference for lung cancer and chest X-ray abnormalities will be started in the coming months.

Each week, members of the oncology team also make academic rounds on the inpatient unit with all of the oncology nurses. They review each cancer case on the floor.

A team of clinicians—physicians, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists—worked very hard to develop Frederick Memorial's own patient education brochures. Frederick Memorial personalized the education tools to reflect its community ties. Currently, the cancer program offers its own drug treatment cards and brochures on specific cancer sites, including breast, colon, and prostate. These patient education brochures retain a unique flavor by using photos of actual community members.

Come On In...

Located across the street from the hospital, the Regional Cancer Therapy Center houses the latest technology in outpatient cancer therapy, offering state-of-the-art treatment in a warm, compassionate



Compassionate care is provided at the IV Outpatient Center.

Vital Statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 240
- Cancer unit beds: 32
- Number of new analytic cancer cases seen per year: 1000
- Managed care penetration in Maryland: 37 percent

Selected Patient Support Services

- Spiritual care and psychosocial needs of the patient with a cancer diagnosis, their family, and/or significant others are addressed.
- Support groups are offered specifically for brain tumor, and ovarian cancer, as well as for cancer patients and family caregivers.
- Additional support programs offered are *Look Good/Feel Better*, *Man to Man*, *Reach to Recovery*, and *Stop Smoking for Life*.
- Complementary services include massage therapy, yoga, breathing exercises, meditation, nutrition and weight management counseling, and a fitness program.

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atmosphere. Within the modern facility are hospital-affiliated chemotherapy and radiation therapy programs and facilities for community outreach, patient education, and support. These services and support are close to home for cancer patients, their families, and friends throughout Frederick County and the surrounding region, whose population is expected to reach 244,000 in the year 2010.

The cancer center offers excellent diagnostic capabilities and medical expertise. Breast cancer is the most common newly diagnosed cancer in Frederick. "Not only are we committed to the prompt diagnosis of breast cancer, but we are also passionately committed to breast cancer prevention and treatment," said Brian O'Connor, M.D., chairman of the Comprehensive Cancer Committee.

To aid in early detection of breast cancer, the Frederick Memorial Healthcare System (FMHCS) has recently added several powerful new technologies—breast MRI and Image Checker—to the department of radiology. In addition, the department of radiology offers PET scanning for more accurate and complete staging of breast cancer before and during treatment.

FMHCS offers both 3-D conformal therapy and brachytherapy seed implants as treatment options for its patients with prostate cancer. A multidisciplinary cancer team with years of experience in brachytherapy and radiation oncology spearhead the center's comprehensive treatment plan.

The radiation oncology department is preparing for growth and plans to add an additional linear accelerator to better serve the hospital's patients and accommodate ever-increasing patient volumes. Plans also include acquiring a CT simulator, which will enable these specialists to create more precise treatment plans on-site.

"Our goal is to make cancer treatment as convenient as possible and to do everything we can to help

individuals through this difficult and challenging time in their lives," said radiation oncologist K.C. Lee, M.D.

Putting Its Patients First

Frederick Memorial's cancer program places a strong value in its ability to offer patients the very best



Frederick Memorial Hospital's Regional Cancer Therapy Center

and latest treatments for cancer by placing them on clinical trials.

"In 2002 Frederick Memorial placed 16 percent of its cancer patients on oncology clinical trials. This figure far exceeds the commendable standard for oncology programs of our size, which is 6 percent of patients placed on clinical trials," said Carol A. Mastalerz, R.N., M.S.N., AOCN®, director of Oncology Services.

Frederick Memorial participates in NSABP, ECOG, pharmaceutical studies, and NCI's Cancer Trials Support Unit (CTSU) study protocols. "We work hard at clinical research," Rausch said. "We have a full-time research coordinator and a data manager who works with the research coordinator. We believe research is important, because it offers the patient access to the most up-to-date therapies and keeps the physicians current with the latest treatments and therapies." Some of the studies currently underway include the Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene (STAR), and pharmaceutical trials with such drugs as bevacizumab in breast, lung, and colon cancer; squalamine in lung cancer; and Iressa™ as adjuvant treatment for completely resected stage IB, II or IIIA non-small-cell lung cancer.

To continue to increase accrual to clinical studies, three physicians have each taken a research leadership role. One heads up all breast cancer trials, another heads up all

lymphoma and lung studies, and the third is responsible for ovarian and GI trials. This approach helps to better coordinate studies.

"This is one of the most exciting times in oncology," Rausch said. "We are finally starting to reap the benefits of all the molecular studies that have been ongoing over the years. Molecular-targeted therapies offer great hope for some really significant advances in the very near future."

In recognition of its important and outstanding contributions to clinical cancer research, Oncology Care Consultants, one of the oncology practices that staff the cancer program, received a clinical research award for community oncology practices from the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) at the 2003 ASCO annual meeting in Chicago.

On the Horizon

The next step in the cancer program's journey will be a new "virtual" Breast Clinic, including a navigator to help guide patients through the entire breast care process. The program is scheduled to come online sometime in the next 12 months.

The cancer program is also in the conceptual stages of implementing a specialty clinic to better serve its lung cancer patients.

The Frederick Memorial Cancer Program is now approaching a new era in cancer care by focusing on the development of an Oncology Service Line, Mastalerz said. This program will coordinate cancer services for improved patient, physician, and staff satisfaction.

The Oncology Service Line will be organized in a cost-effective, coordinated, and quality-driven model to improve care delivery. New patient programs will be identified and developed based on pertinent data and community need. They will be evaluated on expected specific, identified outcomes.

While its patient services and programs improve and expand, the Regional Cancer Therapy Center continues to offer its patients a successful mixture of cutting-edge treatment and research within a supportive, close-knit community environment. ■