

PROFILE

Presbyterian Cancer Center at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, N.C.

Innovation, achievement, and an open outlook

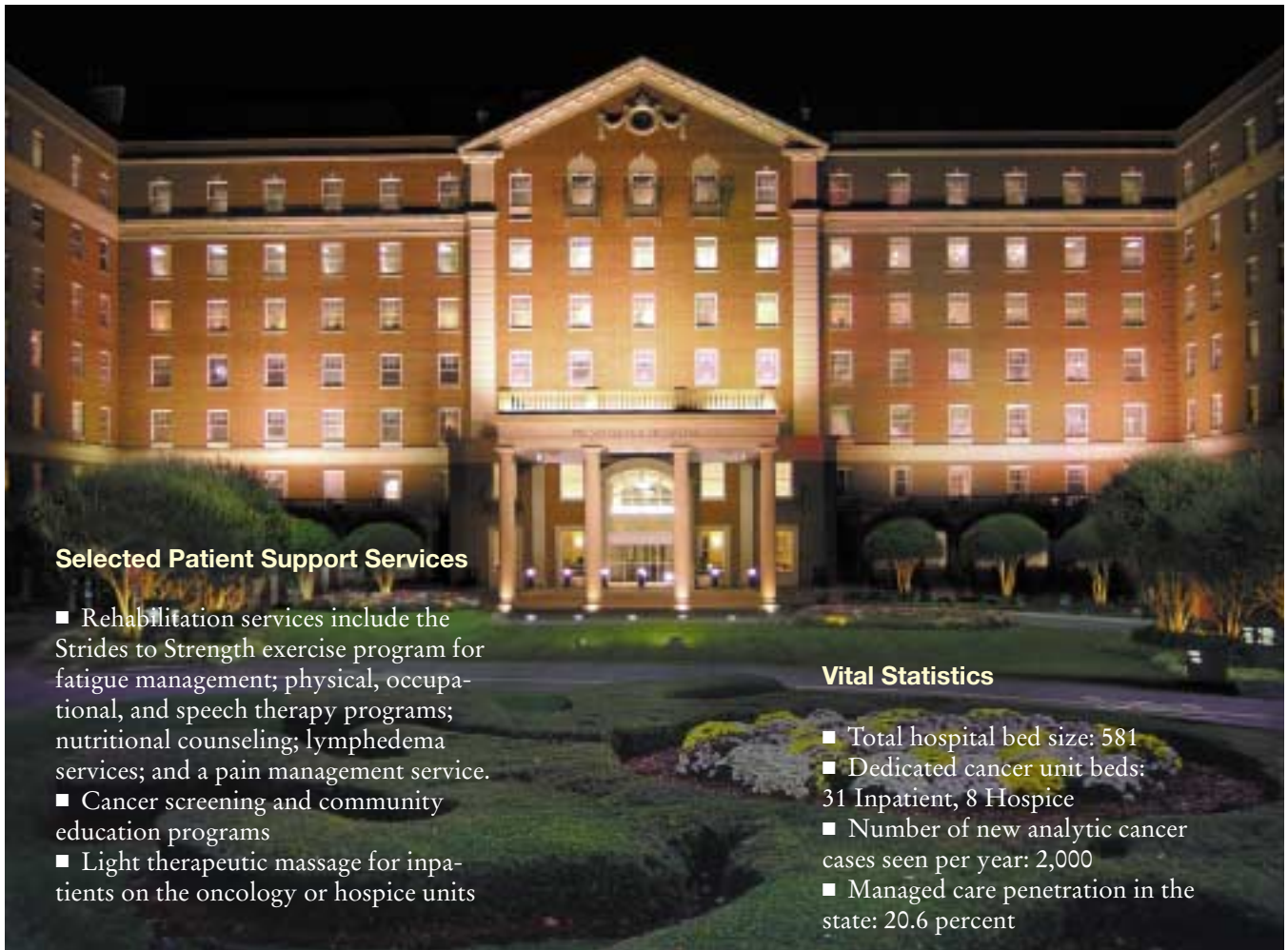
The Presbyterian Cancer Center at Presbyterian Hospital, in Charlotte, N.C., opened its doors in 1986 and has been one of the region's leading cancer care systems ever since. The first designated comprehensive cancer program in the state of North Carolina, Presbyterian has continually added resources for its patients over the years, and today has a number of unusual and outstanding services.

"Our program is dedicated to the care of the whole patient, and symptom management is just as important as cancer treatment," said Richard Reiling, M.D., Presbyterian Cancer Center's medical director.

The Multidisciplinary Clinics

According to Reiling and Barbara LiPira, R.N., M.S.N., OCN[®], executive director for oncology services, one of the programs of which Presbyterian is most proud is its multidisciplinary oncology clinics, where patients with breast, lung, and prostate cancer can have their case

reviewed by a team of experts. In one day, the patient meets with a surgeon, a medical oncologist, and a radiation oncologist, who examine the patient while a pathologist and radiologist are viewing the patient's slides and X-rays. The patient also sees a clinical research nurse, a nurse educator, a nutritionist, and a wellness specialist. All these practitioners meet at the end of the day and conduct a detailed case review. The team develops an individualized treatment plan, which is given to the patient and the patient's referring physician that afternoon. The patient also has



Selected Patient Support Services

- Rehabilitation services include the Strides to Strength exercise program for fatigue management; physical, occupational, and speech therapy programs; nutritional counseling; lymphedema services; and a pain management service.
- Cancer screening and community education programs
- Light therapeutic massage for inpatients on the oncology or hospice units

Vital Statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 581
- Dedicated cancer unit beds: 31 Inpatient, 8 Hospice
- Number of new analytic cancer cases seen per year: 2,000
- Managed care penetration in the state: 20.6 percent

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the opportunity to meet with a volunteer cancer survivor who shares insights about the cancer experience. Uninsured or underinsured breast cancer patients who want to use the multidisciplinary clinics are support-



ed by a grant from the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

“We go out of our way to be a purely consultative service, but our recommendations are valued and change the care plans of 10 to 15 percent of the patients we see,” said Reiling. “About 32 physicians rotate through the clinic. They could see seven or eight patients in their private practices in the time it takes to see two or three patients in the multidisciplinary clinic, so all of them are giving up revenue to be there. They have a real commitment to the cancer program and quality cancer decisions.” Reiling hopes to expand the clinics to include colorectal and bladder cancers, lymphoma, and melanoma in the future.

Compassionate, Supportive Care
Buddy Kemp Caring House, one of the nation’s most extensive cancer support services, opened in July 1999, after nearly four years of planning. The center was built on land donated by the hospital with money contributed by the community and NationsBank, where Buddy Kemp, who died of brain cancer in 1990, was employed. Presbyterian Hospital currently supports the house’s day-to-day expenses, but philanthropy efforts are underway to create a self-sustaining endowment that will make the Buddy Kemp Caring House financially independent.

The center does not have overnight accommodations, but

offers all the non-medical services to support a cancer diagnosis, including education, counseling, support groups, special workshops, and financial case management.

“If you can intervene early, find out where a patient’s major stressors lie, and do something about them—whether they’re financial, social, psychological, or spiritual—the patient will do better overall, be more compliant with treatment, and not come to the hospital seeking medical help for non-medical problems such as

anxiety and depression,” said Myra Johnston, L.C.S.W, the program’s director.

Radiation Oncology: High Scores

The radiation oncology department at Presbyterian has two state-of-the-art linear accelerators capable of IMRT. The department will be completely filmless by the end of 2003, can perform both palladium and iodine prostate seed implants, and offers hyperthermia and eye plaque treatment for choroidal melanoma. In addition to these achievements, the department is a beautiful and supportive atmosphere in which to receive care.

“Our radiation oncology department is consistently one of the highest scoring divisions in the hospital for patient satisfaction,” said LiPira. “All the radiation oncology staff members, from receptionists to physicians, do what they can to make coming there a positive experience.”

The department is filled with plants and the treatment vaults are beautiful. Both linear accelerators are housed in rooms with stained glass ceilings, and two murals (one of the beach and one of the mountains) were recently painted on the walls. The area between the waiting room and the accelerators is lined with framed artwork from nearby Quail Hollow Middle School, and the artwork is rotated every three months. Sarah Carpenter, the department’s manager, said the students are enthusiastic about exhibiting at the center and will be brought to Presbyterian on a regular basis to learn about radiation oncology and the impact of their art donations.

A member of the Southeast Cancer Control Consortium, Presbyterian Cancer Center has access to almost all NCI-sponsored clinical trials plus studies run by pharmaceutical companies. Seventy-five adult trials are currently open, including the STAR and SELECT prevention studies, and accrual is 8 percent of current patients.

Presbyterian Cancer Center is providing world-class, compassionate care on every level and is planning to expand its services even further in the future. The cancer center is an open and growing place, moving into the future with confidence and innovation. ☐

At the Buddy Kemp Caring House

- The Guffey Family Library provides written and videotaped information on cancer plus Internet access.
- Workshops include Cancer Basics, Complementary Approaches to Cancer, a skin care program for men, cooking classes, fatigue awareness programs, and financial wellness seminars.
- The Lending Boutique loans wigs, scarves, turbans, and breast prostheses to patients free of charge.
- Short-term individual and family therapy is offered, and a walk-in crisis service is available.
- Massage, relaxation therapy and imagery, yoga, Tai Chi, biofeedback, art and music therapy, and Healing Touch are available on site and at venues in the community.
- Bereavement programs are offered for both adults and children.
- Support groups include Adapting and Growing with Cancer; Advanced Techniques (meditation and self-help); the Live Poet Society (therapeutic writing); Man to Man; Look Good Feel Better with a special group for Hispanic women; a caregivers’ workshop; and What Now? (problem-solving skills for patients and families).
- Camp Phoenix, a weekend retreat for adult cancer patients and their families, takes place once a year.