

## The Comprehensive Cancer Center at Rhode Island Hospital

### Connected for care: organizing services across the system

With the grand opening celebration for its new cancer center in October 2004, the Rhode Island Hospital realized the results of more than four years of effort. Rhode Island Hospital in Providence is the flagship hospital of Lifespan, a health system in Rhode Island that includes Rhode Island Hospital/Hasbro Children's Hospital, the Miriam Hospital, Newport Hospital, and Bradley Hospital. A 719-bed, Level 1 trauma center, Rhode Island Hospital serves patients from Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. The largest teaching hospital for Brown Medical School and other state colleges and universities, Rhode Island Hospital provides a major portion of healthcare education in the state.

In 2001 three of these hospitals joined together to create the Comprehensive Cancer Center uniting expertise and resources across the healthcare system. Approximately, 5,000 new cases of cancer are diagnosed in Rhode Island each year. The Comprehensive Cancer Center sees 3,400 new analytic cases annually, and Rhode Island Hospital alone sees 1,900 new analytic cases each year.

The new cancer center at Rhode Island Hospital is the bricks-and-mortar realization of the health system's commitment to organizing and streamlining cancer services. The design, structure, and delivery of cancer services in this 54,000-square-foot, \$14.7 million facility unites all the elements of integrated cancer care in a patient-centered program.

The cancer center at Rhode Island Hospital provides pediatric and medical oncology and radiation oncology services with one-stop scheduling of appointments and treatments and ample patient parking. In the new facility, cancer services are centralized in a three-

floor layout. Radiation oncology is located on the basement level. One floor up are the cancer center's multidisciplinary clinics (tumor boards, protocol nurses, benign hematology, and administrative offices). Up one more level, on the second floor are the cancer center's chemotherapy infusion suites, physician offices, and exam rooms.

The cancer center at Rhode Island Hospital offers patients a multidisciplinary approach to care, with the following teams currently in place:

upper GI; breast; head and neck; melanoma; and thoracic, as well as a team dedicated to pediatric cases. Teams include a surgical oncologist, pathologist, radiation oncologist, surgeon, oncology nurse, social workers, nutritionists, psychiatrists, art therapists, pharmacists, clergy, and other health professionals as needed.

### New Technology and Research

IMRT has been offered at the hospital since 2001, making it one of the first programs in the country to



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#### Vital Statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 719
- Dedicated cancer unit beds: 25
- Number of new analytic cancer cases seen per year: 1,900
- Managed care penetration in Rhode Island: 32 percent

#### Selected Patient Support Services:

- A range of ACS programs are offered including: *I Can Cope*, *Look Good...Feel Better*, *Man to Man*, *Reach to Recovery*, and *Road to Recovery*.
- Genetic counseling is available through the Division of Genetics' Genetic Counseling Center.
- Special programs for pediatric oncology patients include a separate support group for teens, and the Tomorrow Fund Clinic.
- A range of screening programs are offered, including skin, colon, prostate, and breast cancer. An innovative skin cancer screening program takes place at area beaches during the summer months.

provide this new treatment. Currently the program has two linear accelerators. A Trilogy accelerator is scheduled for installation in 2005, and Rhode Island Hospital will be the first in the country to have this new technology.

Rhode Island Hospital was the first site in New England to offer stereotactic radiosurgery. Today the cancer program offers such leading-edge treatment options as gamma knife and radiofrequency ablation for breast, kidney, liver, lung, adrenal, and bone cancers. The hospital is currently leading a study in the use of microwave ablation technology and is one of only three hospitals nationwide to offer this treatment. The Comprehensive Cancer Center offers such other advanced technologies as HDR brachytherapy and MammoSite, and has the only digital mammography and PET scanner in the state. The Anne C. Pappas Breast Center at Rhode Island Hospital boasts the highest screening levels in the state, making the program a leader in the early detection of cancer.

Rhode Island Hospital's oncology clinical research staff includes a program manager, four clinical research nurses, and three clinical research associates. Ten percent of cancer program patients are accrued to clinical trials annually. The cancer center participates in numerous national cooperative groups including CALGB, RTOG, and NSABP. In addition, Rhode Island Hospital has an ongoing association with the Brown University Oncology Group (BrUOG). Currently, patients at the cancer program have access to more than 70 active studies, covering all major cancer sites.

## Listening to Patients

Planners of the new cancer center placed a high premium on listening to what patients and their families hope for in cancer care. Design of the new facility focused on ease of access and one-stop care to streamline services.

Paying attention to patients meant

noticing that, when visiting the center, patients and their families most often gravitated toward quiet, peaceful areas. To meet the need for tranquil, reflective areas, a healing garden and fountain were incorporated into the new facility's plans. Bringing beauty into the center has been something of a mission for Sandy Stamoulis, RN, senior vice president



**These colorful "bottles of hope" are crafted by cancer patients and then displayed in the second floor lobby of the Comprehensive Cancer Center.**

of cancer services for Lifespan, Inc., "I look at the cancer center as being a place where we provide the best of competent, compassionate care. I would like our patients to only focus on getting well. We provide all the services and support they need so that they can then concentrate solely on their recovery."

To that end, Ms. Stamoulis has championed the concept of the theme of "hope" in all aspects of the center. This includes incorporating original artwork into the new facility. Working with a donor who provided seed money, the program now enjoys over 100 original art pieces all by Rhode Island artists. In addition, colors and lighting were selected to provide a peaceful, homelike atmosphere. Local artist Peter Geisser created stained glass designs depicting the four seasons of hope for the infusion area.

Through the efforts of another local artist, Diane Gregoire, cancer center patients are invited to participate in the creative process. Several times a week, Gregoire comes to the center to help patients to craft "bottles of hope." Working with old medicine bottles and clay, patients create their own "bottles of hope" and, if they choose, place a personal message inside. While many patients keep their creations or give them to

someone who they feel needs "hope," some patients' creations are on display in the second floor lobby of the Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Patient opinion also helped influence a unique design element in the cancer center's new chemotherapy infusion suite. Included are four patient "pods."

"In doing research about seating chairs in the cancer center, we found that some patients want to be by themselves and some want to be in group. No one wants just two chairs," Stamoulis said. The unique pod design allows the space to be reconfigured by closing and opening doors. Patients receiving chemotherapy can choose to be alone or to be grouped with two or three other people. "We have a group of breast cancer patients who actually planned to have chemotherapy together on Fridays," Stamoulis said.

"Gifts of Hope" is another way in which the cancer center anticipates the needs of patients. This on-site boutique will offer a complete range of supportive products including wigs, prostheses, and lingerie.

The cancer program staff at Rhode Island Hospital understands that patients want information and resources. "Nursing is the key" to meet this need, according to Ms. Stamoulis. On the center's second floor, patients can visit an American Cancer Society (ACS) resource center. Located outside the resource center are two computers that patients can use to access online information.

Among the supportive care services available to patients are nutrition services, psychosocial services, and pastoral care. Currently in the planning stages is an innovative Fatigue Clinic. This clinic, staffed by a nurse practitioner, is being designed to address symptom management. Working with other disciplines, the nurse practitioner will assess patients experiencing fatigue and develop patient-specific plans to address patients' individual needs.

Rhode Island Hospital, along with its partners in the Comprehensive Cancer Center, continues to connect to patients and to the community to provide high-quality care close to home. ❏