

## The Carl & Dorothy Bennett Cancer Center

at Stamford Hospital, Stamford, Conn.

*Comprehensive, individualized care focused on healing the whole person*

Located on the coast of southeastern Connecticut, within commuting distance of New York City, the Carl & Dorothy Bennett Cancer Center at Stamford Hospital offers patients state-of-the-art cancer care enhanced by an exceptional level of supportive care services. For Bennett Cancer Center patients, this means access to treatments designed to heal the whole person—mind, body, and spirit.

Established in 1992, the Carl & Dorothy Bennett Cancer Center is known regionally for the excellent care provided to patients. Accredited as a Teaching Hospital Cancer Program from the American College of Surgeons, Bennett Cancer Center physicians are on the faculty at Columbia University Medical School. This affiliation gives patients an even greater access to world-class facilities, research protocols, and state-of-the-art equipment.

Boasting a strong clinical trials program, staffed by a full-time nurse coordinator, the cancer center accrues nearly 13 percent of cancer patients to clinical trials, and participates in more clinical trials than any other community hospital in the state.

### Leading-Edge Technology

Diagnostic imaging services include CT scan; PET/CT; ultrasound; nuclear medicine, including Proscint/CT fusion; and MRI, including core biopsy under MRI guidance. Stamford Hospital is one of the few programs nationwide with the new ATEC breast biopsy system—a minimally invasive biopsy technique. Also available are stereotactic core needle biopsy, ultrasound core needle biopsy, sentinel node biopsy, diagnostic radiology, and digital mammography with CAD (computer-aided diagnosis). In 2006 the program began offering CT screening for lung cancer.

With two linear accelerators,



Radiation oncology's treatment suite features soothing images.

### Vital statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 305
- Dedicated cancer unit beds (inpatient): 28
- Number of new analytic cancer cases seen per year: 760

### Selected Patient Support Services

- Cancer Genetics Program, staffed by a full-time genetic counselor, emphasizing education, early detection, and genetic counseling to help identify those at higher risk for cancer
- *What Do I Do Now?* Life-after-treatment support for women who have completed treatment
- *Nutritional Well-Being During Cancer Treatment*

the radiation oncology treatment modalities include brachytherapy for prostate and gynecological cancers, and intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) for prostate cancer.

The Bennett Cancer Center has the only peripheral stem cell and autologous bone marrow transplant program in the state, outside a university setting.

### A Place to Heal

Visitors to the Bennett Cancer Center can relax in a light-filled atrium lush with greenery. A tray of homemade cookies rests on the main reception desk—one of many homey

touches provided by the center's active volunteer corps. On the ground floor of the center are radiation oncology services and the offices of the oncology services administrator, the patient services coordinator, and the oncology counselor. The second floor houses the medical oncology offices of Hematology Oncology, PC, with seven board-certified medical oncologists, and chemotherapy infusion services. Both floors of the Cancer Center connect to Stamford Hospital.

The center has seven private chemotherapy suites complete with TV, VCR, daybed, and recliner. A skylight illuminates the group

chemotherapy room, which features colorful murals created through the cancer center's art therapy program.

Hematology Oncology, PC, is one of 14 practices nationwide chosen to participate in a study on the use of etablets (electronic tablets) and patient symptom reporting. When patients arrive, they are given an etablet programmed with a series of questions related to how they feel. Clinicians are immediately sent the answers, so when they sit down with the patient, they already have information on symptoms and side-effects of treatment.

## Individualized Care

"What makes our program unique," said Elizabeth Manfredo, MS, RD, administrator of Oncology Services, "is the way we individualize our care for patients not only clinically but in the variety of supportive services offered."

Through fundraising efforts supported by the Stamford community, the Bennett Cancer Center has created an exceptional program of support services. These are offered to any Bennett Cancer Center patient at no additional charge. The center has developed an Integrative Medicine Program featuring a full menu of complementary modalities: meditation, visualization, stress management, group support, massage, Reiki, reflexology, tai chi, yoga, "Expression Through Art" (creative arts and crafts and art therapy program), music therapy, and a post-treatment Exercise and Nutrition Program.

"Patients love it," says Manfredo. "We started in the outpatient setting, and services were offered eight hours per week. Services are now provided 20 hours per week. Six per diem practitioners were initially hired, and we now have nine currently on staff." Post-treatment, the goal is to get patients back to living life at the pre-cancer level or even better. A full-time patient services coordinator (a non-clinical position) helps cancer patients access such services as transportation to the cancer center, appointments with the Integrative Medicine Program,



The atrium of the Carl & Dorothy Bennett Cancer Center

and daily activities at the Center.

The cancer program's close connection to the community has been key in helping its support services grow and flourish. The Integrative Medicine Program is funded through donations to the Bennett Cancer Center and through special fundraising events such as the Annual Bennett Cancer Center WALK & RUN (now in its eleventh year). Supported by an active team of more than 200 volunteers, this community-wide event draws thousands of participants each year and over the past 10 years has raised more than \$4 million for the cancer center. For the past eight years, the program has also benefited from The RIDE, a bike fundraising event featuring 10-, 25-, 50- and 100-mile rides through lower Fairfield, Conn., and Westchester, N.Y.

## Beyond Therapy

At a time when attention is increasingly turning to meeting the needs of cancer survivors, the Bennett Cancer Center's Exercise & Nutrition Program is leading the way by providing individual structure and personal training to help post-treatment patients feel strong, healthy, and positive as they work to retain or regain their strength and stamina. This free program includes three sessions of personal training a week, for eight weeks, and is available to patients who've completed chemo-

therapy or radiation therapy at the cancer center.

## Optimal Breast Care Services

Located across town is The Women's Breast Center where a full-time nurse coordinator helps patients through the continuum care. "I am here to navigate patients through the healthcare system, because this is a time when women are very vulnerable," said Michele Speer, RN, nurse coordinator at the Women's Breast Center. "My aim is to allay anxiety and to make sure every patient feels cared for and informed."

A Breast Cancer Second Opinion Clinic is also available to patients. This clinic provides access to a multidisciplinary team (breast surgeons, radiologists, pathologists in cooperation with Bennett Cancer Center's medical

oncologists, and radiation oncologists) to help identify and prioritize treatment options. Bi-monthly breast cancer conferences bring this multidisciplinary team together to develop treatment plans.

## Giving Back to the Community

The Bennett Cancer Center gives back the community through a variety of outreach and educational activities. The program's mobile mammography vans have screened more than 35,000 women since 1996. Currently the program is providing about 1,000 screenings per year that are paid for through outside grants and are therefore free to uninsured women.

A quarterly Bennett Cancer Center patient newsletter, *Intouch*, covers a range of topics of interest to patients and caregivers, educational articles, and highlights of coming events.

Staff at the Bennett Cancer Center has helped spearhead coordination of community education on prevention and early detection of cancer with other community groups. Featured in the Mayor's Cancer Awareness Campaign, the cancer center's aim has been collaboration with other programs to eliminate redundancy and to get the message out on such important topics as screenings for breast and prostate cancer, anti-smoking campaigns at local schools, and skin cancer awareness. 📍