

University of Colorado Cancer Center in Aurora, Colorado

Leading the Way in 21st Century Cancer Care

Late in 2000, exciting changes were underway at the University of Colorado Cancer Center (UCCC). Already the region's only NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center, UCCC was moving into a newly constructed, 109,000 square-foot, outpatient facility, the Anschutz Cancer Pavilion at Fitzsimons. Located in Aurora, Colorado, Fitzsimons was formerly a U.S. Army medical center. The site is currently undergoing a multi-year, multi-billion dollar transformation into a high-tech biomedical center. The Anschutz Cancer Pavilion at Fitzsimons, one of the first facilities in the Centers for Advanced Medicine to open, began providing clinical services to patients in 2001 and has grown to serve over 100,000 patient visits in 2005.

A teaching hospital affiliated with the state's only medical school, UCCC provides the highest-caliber cancer care, while its extensive educational programs help train cancer researchers, physicians, nurses, and pharmacists. The program sees about 3,500 new patients each year. While UCCC treats nearly every cancer type, leading disease sites are melanoma, prostate, brain, breast, gastrointestinal, and leukemia. As an NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center, UCCC is often sought out by patients with difficult to treat cancers. The program, which also places a strong emphasis on cancer prevention and early detection, accrues about 13,000 patients to clinical trials each year.

Site-Specific Cancer Programs

UCCC's faculty is organized around site-specific cancer programs. Within these, highly skilled cancer specialists treat and research nearly every form of cancer. Site-specific programs include breast,

lung, prostate, colorectal, gastrointestinal, gynecological, and melanoma. This specialization by disease site means that patients have access to caregivers with an exceptional depth of experience and expertise in each specific cancer type.

The program's multidisciplinary teams meet on a monthly or weekly basis. Teams are focused around a tumor board and case discussion. Breast cancer and lung cancer multidisciplinary clinics are arranged so that patients, in a single visit, can be seen by multiple specialists.

Typically patients to these clinics will see a medical oncologist, surgical oncologist, and radiation oncologist during one visit to the cancer center and in a case conference receive a recommended plan of care.

Leading 21st Century Research

UCCC's extensive research program promises to be further enhanced by the state-of-the-art research facilities on the Fitzsimons campus. Unique to the area, UCCC offers a Developmental

Selected Patient Support Services

- UCCC's classes and five monthly support groups are free to patients, family members, and the community.
- Bi-annual Spa Days bring manicures, pedicures, and massage to patients during their treatment.
- CAMmodalities are offered through UCH's Center for Integrative Medicine.
- Palliative Care Consult Services team works directly with patient's primary physician(s).



The University of Colorado's Anschutz Cancer Pavilion at Fitzsimons in Aurora, Colo.

Therapeutics Program devoted to Phase I clinical trials. Through grants from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Friends of Cancer Research, UCCC is working to expand access to early clinical trials for elderly cancer patients.

A leader in lung cancer research, UCCC received an \$11 million Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) grant from NCI to help translate lung cancer research into earlier detection and prevention of the disease. The grant allows UCCC's lung cancer specialists to offer patients expanded treatment options through clinical trials, as well as the most advanced technology in radiation therapy and surgical techniques. UCCC also participates in the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST), and NCI's Prostate, Lung, Colorectal, and Ovarian Cancer (PLCO) Screening Trial. More than 12,000 participants have been accrued to PLCO in Colorado over the past ten years.

Pioneering New Technology

UCCC was the first center in the region to offer digital mammography. The program offers sentinel lymph node biopsy, and MammoSite® brachytherapy for breast cancer, and the advanced imaging of PET/CT.

Radiation therapy treatment modalities available to cancer patients include 3D-CRT planning, high-dose rate brachytherapy (HDR), intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT), and image guided radiation therapy (IGRT). In addition, the program offers Novalis Shaped Beam Radio-surgery for patients with brain and spine lesions, as well as small lesions in other areas of the body including the liver, lung, or prostate.

Superior Support Services

Located off the main waiting room of the UCCC is the Cancer Resource Center (CRC), which is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 4 pm. The CRC offers informational booklets and brochures, a lending library, three computers programmed with easy-to-access information on a

range of cancer-related topics, movies, audiotapes, and an in-house lending library, as well as information on support groups at UCCC and throughout Colorado. The CRC also provides support groups and educational programs on living and coping with cancer.

At each UCCC cancer clinic (breast, urologic-oncology, radiation-oncology, cutaneous-oncology), the infusion center family lounge, and the inpatient family lounge, patients can use dedicated computer kiosks that are programmed with educational materials, and informational brochures are also available.

Two and a half FTE social workers are assigned to the outpatient cancer program, and an additional social worker is dedicated to the inpatient unit. The program's registered dietitian not only works individually with cancer patients, she also provides monthly "Nutrition and Cancer Care" classes.

Each month, UCCC's support services offers evening events sponsored by the Wellness Community including "Frankly Speaking about Lung Cancer," and "Frankly Speaking about New Discoveries in Cancer Care." In June, UCCC will host a celebration to honor cancer survivors, "A Celebration of Hope."

Adjacent to the Anschutz Cancer Pavilion is the University of Colorado Hospital's Center for Integrative Medicine, offering patients physician-managed care that emphasizes wellness and healing drawing on both conventional medicine and complementary and alternative medicine. A wide range of complementary therapies exist including acupuncture, Chinese medicine, biofeedback, massage therapy, and art therapy.

Within the Anschutz Cancer Pavilion, the Margaret Hurtt Garden allows patients and families a peaceful respite. The 6,000-square-foot landscaped garden is located on a second floor balcony, directly outside the Infusion Center. Through a wall of windows, patients can enjoy the garden and a vista of Colorado's Front Mountain Range beyond.

In 2006, UCCC will join the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) in addressing the needs of the growing number of cancer survivors through the LIVESTRONG™ Survivorship Center of Excellence

Network. LAF has pledged \$1.7 million, which will be distributed throughout the next five years, to support UCCC's progressive, comprehensive survivorship programs, which help people affected by cancer to live life on their own terms.

Tracking Patient Satisfaction: Fostering Communication

For the three outpatient departments in cancer services, UCCC conducts Press Ganey patient satisfaction survey reports at three month intervals. In addition, UCCC has initiated an innovative email program to gauge patient satisfaction and foster communication. When patients visit the outpatient department, they are asked if they are willing to share their home email address. The program then sends a follow-up email survey after the patient's visit. This short, three-question survey asks: Were you satisfied with the overall service? Were you seen on time? Were your questions answered? Included is a text box for comments. In the four years since the program has been running, patient response has been quite high. Email responses go directly to the office of the hospital CEO. The cancer program receives a summary. If there are free text comments, the cancer program gets to hear the positives. Likewise, if there are concerns, the program hears directly about any issues. Everything is shared with the appropriate departments and managers.

"On the positive side, it's helpful to get constructive feedback and it's a morale builder because there are specifics we can share with staff and those are great motivators," said E. Strode Weaver, FACHE, MBA, MHSA, executive director of oncology services at UCCC. "When there are concerns, the program can follow up and contact the patient directly. When there is personal follow up, it assures the person that their concerns were heard, and we have a problem-solving opportunity."

Hospital Web chats are another innovative approach to reaching out to the community. These live chats provide a sampling of areas that patients are interested in and have been useful in refining the program's educational materials, noted Weaver. Three of these chats have been on cancer-related topics. 