

Making Cancer Care Personal

The Cancer Center at Franciscan Skemp Healthcare in LaCrosse, Wisconsin



The Cancer Center's chemotherapy treatment area features a central nurses' station and eight treatment stations with outdoor views.



Cancer Guide offering Healing Touch for stress management and deep relaxation.

Vital Statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 160
- Designated inpatient cancer unit beds: 37 bed medical unit with oncology trained staff
- Number of new analytic cases seen in 2005: 464

Selected Patient Support Services

- Cancer Support Groups
- *Pathway to Wellness* series of classes
- Massage Therapy, Healing Touch, Acupuncture
- T'ai Chi Chih, Yoga
- Mind/Body Skills Group
- Cancer Cosmetic Support
- Meditation Labyrinth
- Nutrition Counseling and Supplement information

Opened in 2004, the new Cancer Center at Franciscan Skemp Healthcare (FSH) is dedicated to delivering patient-centered care focused on healing the body, mind, heart, and spirit.

Located on the lower level of the FSH Center for Advanced Medicine and Surgery in La Crosse, Wisconsin, the 17,000-square-foot Cancer Center offers highly skilled, compassionate care in an environment that fosters seamless integration of services. In partnership with the Mayo Clinic, the Cancer Center offers patients medical oncology and radiation oncology services all in one convenient location. Approved by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer (CoC) since 1987, in 2006 the FSH Cancer Center received CoC's Outstanding Achievement Award.

Designed with Care

Patients and caregivers entering the FSH Cancer Center are welcomed into a healing environment designed to foster integrated delivery of high-quality, patient-centered care. In the family area, a wall of windows provides natural light while a cozy fireplace, comfortable seating, and colorful artwork create a soothing, non-clinical atmosphere.

Beyond the reception desk and waiting area, the chemotherapy treatment space consists of eight treatment stations and two private treatment "bedrooms," with a central nurses' station. Large windows offer both light and a relaxing view of the courtyard and meditation labyrinth. The program's oncology pharmacist is located in an area immediately adjacent to the infusion treatment room so that he can be in constant interaction with nursing staff, oncologists, and patients throughout the day.

Radiation oncology services, provided by Mayo Clinic staff, are

just steps away on the same floor. Here, too, the focus is on providing leading-edge care in an environment designed to promote patient comfort and healing. Radiation treatment and simulation rooms feature backlit panels with panoramic landscapes.

The cancer program at FSH sees approximately 500 new cancer cases each year with the leading cancer sites being breast, prostate, lung, and colorectal cancer. The program offers the latest treatment options for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer including, computed-assisted detection (CAD) for all screening mammograms, breast MRI, ultrasound-guided biopsy, stereotactic core biopsy, and sentinel lymph node biopsy. The program has one linear accelerator with a vault ready to add a second accelerator. Eclipse and the GE Advantage Workstation are utilized for treatment planning and delivery, offering intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) for brain, abdomen, and head and neck cancers. Since 2005, the program has provided brachytherapy treatment for prostate cancer. Plans for new technology include the implementation of respiratory gating.

The cancer committee at FSH has developed a model for state-of-the-art treatment of breast cancer that outlines the flow of patient care through the institution. The multidisciplinary team approach is designed to provide efficient, high-quality care, streamlining services for patients and reducing wait times. Each breast cancer case is discussed at a multidisciplinary conference which includes personnel from surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, pathology, and other supportive areas. The Cancer Program has designed a similar comprehensive, multidisciplinary model care plan for lung and prostate cancer, as well as lymphoma.

Clinical Trials Access

FSH offers clinical trial participation through the North Central Cancer Treatment Group (NCCTG), a national research cooperative treatment group based in Rochester, Minn., and also through the Cancer Trials Support Unit (CTSU). Currently, 42 studies are open for patient participation including trials for breast, colon, lung, pancreatic



Conveniently located adjacent to the family waiting area, the Cancer Resource Center is furnished with comfortable seating and a cozy fireplace. The center offers books and tapes on a variety of oncology-related topics, as well as computer access for additional information and resources.

cancer, lymphoma, and quality of life studies. Approximately 8 percent of patients are accrued to clinical trials each year.

Innovative Integration

What further sets FSH Cancer Center apart, says Diane Otte, RN, MS, OCN®, director of the Cancer Center, is “unique integration of the entire support team into our program. Our use of resources is not an after thought, when the patient is half-way through treatment. Our Cancer Guide tries to meet with each new patient as soon as he or she enters our program, do an assessment, and identify that patient’s specific support needs.”

Experienced oncology nurse Marti Runyon, RN, BSN, OCN®, is the program’s full-time Cancer Guide. Runyon and Kathleen Graham, RN, MSN, AOCN®, both studied with Dr. James Gordon at the Center for Mind/Body Medicine in Washington, D.C., and bring years of experience integrating mind-body-spirit support into their work with patients. Runyon describes the Cancer Guide as a specialized support

role. The Guide is not only a one-on-one link for patients to the program’s support team, the individual is able to introduce patients to the scope of services available at FSH early on, and refer patients to the program’s supportive and complementary services.

Most on-site complementary services are provided free of charge to cancer patients. If there is a charge, FSH Foundation funding is available

for patients to help defray the cost. Each patient at the Cancer Center also receives a copy of the program’s detailed patient guide, *Your Cancer Care Book*. This take-home resource not only explains the program’s cancer services, it provides a template for patients to organize their information, questions and answers, and reflections.

The program’s commitment to support services reflects its dedication to healing the whole patient. Services include individual and family counseling; cancer support groups; educational and resource material (available in the Cancer Center Resource Area); and referrals

to complementary services. These include the “Pathway to Wellness” class series; the Mind/Body Skills Group; therapies such as massage, Reiki, Shen, and Healing Touch; social work services; nutritional counseling; and spiritual support.

Through the Oasis Program—funded by the FSH Foundation—the Cancer Center’s social workers are able to help patients in need by providing some funds for such practical needs as transportation expenses and paying for groceries.

In the past two years, the Cancer Center has also participated in community outreach events including educational programs related to cancer prevention and detection and an annual Celebrate Life cancer survivors’ event.

A team from FSH was selected to participate in the NCI-funded initial survivorship training program at City of Hope National Medical Center. The team is leading planning efforts to develop a comprehensive survivorship program at FSH that will focus on meeting the needs of patients post-treatment. ☐