

Riverside Cancer Care Center, Riverside Health System, Newport News, Va.

One team with one goal: integrated, seamless, high-quality care

Riverside Health System is a non-profit, multi-facility healthcare system serving Eastern Virginia including the historic Tidewater region (encompassing the cities of Gloucester, Hampton, Newport News, Williamsburg, and Yorktown) and 13 surrounding counties. Riverside Regional Medical Center, the system's flagship facility, is a consortium providing inpatient and outpatient cancer care for more than 1,000 new patients annually. The Riverside Cancer Program has been accredited by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer since 1983; but in April 2006, the health system took a major step in centralizing its outpatient cancer services with the opening of a \$16.4 million comprehensive, freestanding Riverside Cancer Care Center on the campus of the Riverside Regional Medical Center.

The new 27,555-square-foot facility is the centerpiece of the program's outpatient oncology services, optimizing the integration of dedicated staff and state-of-the-art technology to provide high-quality care in a setting close-to-home for patients and their families. The Riverside Cancer Program also offers outpatient oncology care in Williamsburg as well as at the Middle Peninsula Cancer Center in Gloucester, Va.

Seamless Care, Close to Home

Designed with the comfort of patients and their families in mind, the new two-story Riverside Cancer Care Center features a lobby filled with

natural light, a comfortably furnished family care room with a cozy fireplace, a Cancer Resources Library for patients, and a healing arts garden.

The Center's first floor houses Riverside Cancer Services, a collection of support services for patients, as well as radiation oncology services. The Radiation Oncology Department includes two new Elekta linear accelerators and offers leading-edge technology for the treatment and diagnosis of cancer. Radiation oncology treatment modalities include intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT),

image guided radiation therapy (IGRT), and brachytherapy, including MammoSite®. Diagnostic services, including MRI, CT, PET/CT, and nuclear medicine, while not in the same building, are located nearby and seamlessly linked through both information systems and the Patient Navigation programs. Also nearby is the \$6 million Riverside and University of Virginia Radiosurgery Center, a joint venture with the University of Virginia that opened in 2006. The Radiosurgery Center is the first in the state to offer Gamma Knife® intracranial and Synergy-S® extra-cranial technology. Currently, Gamma Knife stereotactic radiosurgery is being used



Kimberly W. Schlesinger, MD, is medical director of the Riverside Breast Cancer Program.



The new Riverside Cancer Care Center provides inviting and relaxing areas for patients, families, and caregivers.

Vital Statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 500+
- Inpatient medical oncology unit: 29 beds; inpatient Hem/Onc ICU: 6 beds
- Number of new analytic cases in 2006: Approximately 1,000

Selected Patient Support Services

- Cancer resource library
- Outreach, education, and screening programs
- Healing garden
- Nutritional counseling
- Pastoral counseling
- Family support services
- Cancer support groups
- Hospice

to treat benign and malignant brain tumors and lesions as well as other non-malignant conditions such as arteriovenous malformations and trigeminal neuralgia. In 2006, Riverside also implemented the DaVinci System surgical robot, making this new technology available for prostate and other urological and gynecological cancer patients.

Medical Oncology at Riverside

The second floor of the new Riverside Cancer Care Center houses both Riverside Gynecologic Oncology as well as the Peninsula Cancer Institute, which is Riverside's Medical Oncology and Hematology division. Providers in this medical group include five board-certified medical oncologists/hematologists, one of whom is additionally board certified in palliative medicine; two nurse practitioners, both of whom are former oncology nurses; a registered pharmacist; and 20 oncology nurses, 75 percent of whom are OCN®-certified nurses, several of whom are exclusively dedicated to patient and family education. Others serve exclusively as research coordinators, with the remainder involved in chemotherapy administration.

Like many physicians at Riverside, the physicians of the Peninsula Cancer Institute are members of the umbrella Riverside Medical Group. The largest multi-specialty group in the state, Riverside Medical Group includes 238 physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants in 65 practice locations. These physicians are all employees of the health system, in which Riverside Medical Group is undertaking a leadership role in terms of decision-making regarding clinical services and overall system operations.

According to Mark E. Ellis, MD, Medical Director of the Riverside Cancer Program, providing seamless, comprehensive care is the aim of all Riverside Cancer Program care providers. Dr. Ellis notes that the program is especially proud of its fully integrated system of care. Because Riverside is a physician-led

health system, everyone is "wearing the same jersey and playing for the same team," Ellis said. "It's wonderful to have a group of such talented and dedicated physicians from a wide variety of specialties, including general and oncologic surgery, gynecologic oncology, urology, radiation oncology, medical oncology, thoracic surgery, otolaryngology, and neurosurgery, as well as a full spectrum of

Community Connections

The Riverside Cancer Program serves the surrounding communities by providing a range of support, outreach, education, and early detection programs. Working with community partners such as the American Cancer Society and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Riverside sponsors screening and educational events such as community health fairs; prostate, breast, cervical, and skin cancer screenings; Look Good...Feel Better classes; and more.

primary care physicians, which comprise the physician component of the Riverside Cancer Program."

The Peninsula Cancer Institute provides compassionate state-of-the-art cancer care with a staff of 75 highly trained individuals dedicated to healing in Williamsburg and Gloucester as well as at the new center in Newport News. The physical layout of each facility provides chemotherapy infusion in small group rooms as well as in private rooms in a homelike, comfortable setting that incorporates natural light. Chemotherapy is mixed in on-site oncology pharmacies that meet USP 797 standards. The Peninsula Cancer Institute also provides patients at all sites with genetic counseling and access to cutting-edge clinical trials through its Cancer Research Department, which is housed within the medical oncology suite at the new cancer center on Riverside's Newport News campus. The research program participates in a variety of NCI-sponsored and industry-sponsored trials.

The cancer program holds two weekly tumor board case conferences—one focused on neurosciences and one multidisciplinary. Twice

monthly the program also holds a breast cancer case conference.

Enhancing the Patient Experience

Over the past few years, Riverside has implemented several programs designed to enhance the patient care experience. In the fall of 2005, the Breast Cancer Patient Navigation program was initiated. Yvonne Pike, MEd, the program's first patient navigator, has extensive experience working with oncology patients and their families, as well as an understanding of the diagnosis and treatment processes, and financial aspects of care. She meets with patients early in the cancer care process and serves as a central point of contact for them through the journey from diagnosis through treatment. The Breast Cancer Patient Navigation Program proved so successful that two additional patient navigators have been added to serve lung cancer and prostate cancer patients. Patient navigator services are provided to patients at no cost.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ellis, the Riverside Cancer Program is also committed to enhancing the patient experience through its growing Integrative Oncology Program. Patients at all Peninsula Cancer Institute sites can choose from a range of complementary therapies aimed at helping them achieve the best quality of life possible while undergoing treatment. Integrative therapy offerings include massage therapy, with some special sessions focusing on lymphedema prevention; music therapy; pet therapy; yoga and meditation; nutrition services; and family services. "We have found a tremendous value [in these integrative support services] in terms of quality of life and in terms of helping patients get through treatments which otherwise can be pretty difficult," said Ellis. "It's a philosophy of care. We want our patients to know that we are not just focusing on their cancer, but that our program focuses on treating the whole person—body, spirit, and mind." With support from the health system, these integrative support services are offered to patients free of charge by the Peninsula Cancer Institute-employed staff of massage therapists, registered dietitians, music therapists, and social workers, as well as volunteers. 📍