

## The Jean and Milton Cooper Cancer Center

Summa Akron City Hospital in Akron, Ohio

**S**umma Health System's cancer program at Summa Akron City Hospital has been accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer since 1975. In 2003 discussions were underway about new cancer center construction. At that time, the program's well-established comprehensive cancer services were spread out in several locations on the urban hospital campus. "We needed to bring [our cancer program] services all into one building and make access easier for the patient," said Douglas Trochelman, MD, medical director of Oncology Services at Summa Health System. This goal was realized in October 2008 with the opening of the new \$28 million Jean and Milton Cooper Cancer Center. The 77,000-square foot, three-story cancer center centralized comprehensive outpatient cancer services—diagnostics, treatment, support, and research—all under one roof. The planning process for the new cancer center was extensive, taking place over three years—from 2005 to 2008.

### Streamlined Access to Care

Today, the cancer center's ground floor entrance welcomes visitors into a spacious lobby area. Here are a reception and information center, a Freshens® café, and the Susan Deveny Pavloff Cancer Resource Library. The lobby's centerpiece is an inspirational sculpture, *Fantasy Garden*, by renowned artist Don Drumm. Also on this level is the radiation oncology department, which offers state-of-the-art technology in a caring environment designed with patient comfort and privacy in mind. The radiation oncology area houses three linear accelerators, including a BrainLab Novalis Shaped Beam Surgery System. Patients have access to advanced treatment modalities including stereotactic radiosurgery, for body as well as brain, and stereotactic radiotherapy;



The Freshens Café offers light, nutritious fare such as fruit smoothies, healthy sandwiches, and soups.

### Vital Statistics

- Total licensed hospital beds: 1,017 (Summa Akron City and St. Thomas Hospitals)
- Dedicated inpatient cancer unit beds: 20
- Number of new analytic cases in 2009: 1,340

### Selected Support Services

- Support programs (Pathways to Wellness, ACS's Look Good...Feel Better; social worker-facilitated oncology support group, and more)
- Susan Deveny Pavloff Cancer Resource Library
- Massage therapy
- Palliative care and hospice

intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT); image-guided radiation therapy (IGRT); high dose rate (HDR) brachytherapy; and MammoSite. Since the opening of the new cancer center, radiation oncology has transitioned to an EMR for all radiation oncology care—the department is paperless and filmless. Patients arriving for radiation therapy treatment have access to private lockers and changing rooms. There are separate waiting areas for male and female patients, each with an outside view of the Healing Garden.

Medical oncology services are

located on the cancer center's first floor. Here are physician offices, a dedicated oncology pharmacy, and an infusion area designed with the patient's needs in mind. The new infusion area's large windows offer abundant natural light. In focus groups, patients expressed a strong desire to have some control over their environment of care during chemotherapy treatment. With seven private rooms and 23 treatment chairs, the infusion area features design elements that give patients options to control privacy, chair orientation, lighting,

and individual TVs. Panels attached to U-shaped ceiling tracks allow patients to pull a curtain around their chairs for privacy or retract the curtain for socializing with others. Individual controls let patients adjust window blinds and lighting (with dimmer switches) within their own area. A corner of the infusion suite is furnished with comfortable seating for visiting family members, and patients can choose to have their chemotherapy in this area as well.

The Clinical Research Center, located on the second floor, is home to the cancer center's active research program. Patients have access to more than 100 clinical trials through the cancer program's participation in the Cooperative Group Outreach Program, the Clinical Trials Support Unit, NSABP, ECOG, RTOG, and industry-sponsored trials. Patients at other Summa Health System hospitals also have access to clinical trials conducted through Summa Akron City Hospital's cancer research program. In both 2003 and 2006, the Jean and Milton Cooper Cancer Center received the American Society of Clinical Oncology's award for clinical trials participation for community-based cancer programs. In 2008, six percent of analytical cases were accrued to clinical trials.

The new cancer center also houses diagnostic imaging services, including digital mammography with CAD, rehabilitation services, and educational and support services. Dedicated specialists available to patients include physical therapists, financial counselor, social worker, psychologist, and patient care coordinators.

### Listening to Patients

Part of the planning process for the new cancer center included focus groups with patients and visits to other newly constructed cancer centers. Patients told the cancer center planning group:

**Parking is important.** Patients and caregivers wanted free, convenient parking at the new cancer center. They did not want to navigate parking decks. Patients coming for multi-day treatment over a period of

weeks did not want to walk through the main lobby every day. The cancer center listened. Today free surface parking is available next to the new cancer center. At the back of the facil-



**Artist Don Drumm's inspiring *Fantasy Garden* sculpture is the centerpiece of the cancer center's lobby.**

ity, patients can take elevators that go directly to the medical oncology or radiation oncology treatment areas.

**Family is important.** The new facility was designed with family and caregiver needs in mind as well. Because cancer treatments can extend over many hours and days, a variety of comfortable seating options were included throughout the building—often with window views. An area on the first floor overlooking the lobby provides comfortable seating and wireless Internet access for visitors.

**Food is important—but minimize the "smell."** Patients wanted food to be available, but did not want food "smells" permeating the new cancer center. Freshens café, located just off the main lobby, is a success with patients and staff. The café provides fruit smoothies, healthy sandwiches, and soups—food that's light and nutritious without a lot of aroma.

Despite the impetus to centralize outpatient cancer services, the decision was made to keep the Breast Health Center adjacent to, but not within, the new cancer center. Patients said they did not want to go to the cancer center for mam-

mograms and the hospital's Breast Health Center is situated only 75 feet from the cancer center with covered walkways between the two facilities.

The patient experience is made of many small details: convenient parking; ease of access; privacy at times and other times companionship; a pleasant view to nature; natural light; lack of food odors; a quiet space—the Jean and Milton Cooper Cancer Center pays attention to these details, providing amenities that help create a patient-focused environment of care.

### Building on a Strong Foundation

The cancer center staff includes RN care coordinators who not only help patients navigate the cancer care continuum, but also help lead the cancer program's tumor-site process improvement committees. Initiatives underway include the lung cancer improvement committee's follow-up program for indeterminate lung nodules discovered in the emergency department or primary care offices.

The space available in the new cancer center has made it possible to streamline patient access to a range of support services. In 2008 the program established comprehensive rehabilitation services at the new cancer center, including an onsite lymphedema clinic, as well as physical therapy and occupational therapy services. A guest services program has also been developed with a dedicated liaison to coordinate these services.

Partnering with the Summit County Health Department and several other local organizations, the cancer center has helped initiate a local chapter of the Angel (African-American Women Nurturing and Giving Each Other Life) Network. This program, which is supported in part by a local Komen for the Cure grant, reaches out to provide breast health education in a variety of community settings, such as churches and beauty salons.

New for 2010 is the development of an integrative medicine program within the cancer center. Spearheaded by a physician who is board certified in intensive care and certified in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), the program will include integrative medicine services such as Reiki therapy, acupuncture, and herbal therapy. ☐