

The Michael and Dianne Bienes Comprehensive Cancer Center at Holy Cross Hospital, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Holy Cross Hospital is a non-profit hospital, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and a member of Catholic Health East. The 571-bed hospital was listed in HealthGrades' America's 50 Best Hospitals (2007 and 2008).

The Michael and Dianne Bienes Comprehensive Cancer Center at Holy Cross Hospital opened in 1999, bringing oncology services together in one convenient location. Approved by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer since 1996, the cancer center comprises 20 integrated multidisciplinary clinical programs.

Focus on Disease-Specific Multidisciplinary Care

Multidisciplinary disease-site-specific care, an emphasis on research, and access to a wide range of clinical trials are characteristics most often associated with large academic cancer centers. Yet, these attributes describe the efforts underway at the Michael and Dianne Bienes Comprehensive Cancer Center, a community-based program serving South Florida.

"Within the cancer center, we are working very hard to create a program with disease-specific expertise and to move from Phase III studies to include a range all the way to Phase I research trials. Our goal is to create a unique program offering consolidated disease-specific services," said Martin E. Gutierrez, MD, medical director of the Bienes Cancer Center.

Dr. Gutierrez outlines a vision for patient care that begins with the services of nurse navigators, encompasses multidisciplinary disease-specific case conferences and clinics, offers access to early phase as well as Phase III clinical trials, and extends to survivorship and palliative care—all with an emphasis on treating the whole patient.

The Bienes Cancer Center facility



Members of the lymphoma multidisciplinary team (from L to R) David Drew, MD; Zdenka Segota, MD; Maria Gonzalez-Morejon, MD; and Martin Gutierrez, MD.

provides a strong foundation for realizing the goal of convenient, consolidated patient-centered services. The two-story building has ample adjacent parking and offers valet parking as well. The first floor is home to the oncology surgeons' offices and radiation oncology services and houses state-of-the-art technology for diagnosis and treatment, including PET/CT and breast MRI.

The radiation oncology department has three linear accelerators, including an Elekta Synergy® S radiation treatment system with an integrated 3D imaging system. Treatments available include IMRT, IGRT, SRS, HDR brachytherapy, prostate seed implants, and MammoSite. The department is staffed by

Vital Statistics

- Total licensed hospital beds: 571
- Dedicated inpatient cancer unit beds: 52
- Number of new analytic cancer cases seen in 2009: 1,352

Selected Support Services

- Genetic risk assessment/counseling
- Patient resource library
- ACS Reach to Recovery, Look Good...Feel Better, and more
- Survivorship Program
- Dedicated oncology dietitian
- Integrated Care—yoga, massage therapy, acupuncture, music therapy
- Pain management services
- Hospice

two radiation oncologists, two oncology nurses, eight certified radiation therapists, two board-certified medical physicists, and three certified dosimetrists.

On the second floor are medical oncology services and the cancer

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center's research department. Chemotherapy treatment is provided in the 35-chair infusion center that features a light-filled atrium, which offers patients the option of sitting outside during their treatment. Here, too, are medical oncologists' offices, exam rooms, and a dedicated oncology pharmacy staffed by an oncology pharmacist and a dedicated research pharmacist.

The cancer center has a well-established schedule of disease-specific multidisciplinary case conferences. On Mondays, oncology grand rounds are held. Thoracic multidisciplinary conferences are held on Tuesdays. Attendees include a pathologist, a radiologist, thoracic surgeons, a medical oncologist, a radiation oncologist, as well as oncology nurses and research nurses. GU clinics, with a focus on prostate and kidney cancers, are held monthly as are GI and multidisciplinary conferences for rare cancers. These case conferences are coordinated by dedicated staff from the cancer registry.

Dr. Gutierrez is championing further consolidation of this effort by developing disease-site-specific multidisciplinary clinics, starting with the launch of a breast cancer clinic in the fall of 2010. At present, the breast clinic is scheduled on a weekly basis. The half-day clinic is held in the breast surgeons' offices on the first floor of the cancer center, and patients are scheduled for the clinic by the breast nurse navigator. The clinic is structured to include a pre-clinic conference for physicians. On the day of the clinic, the patient is seen in turn by each of the specialists, e.g., the surgical oncologist, medical oncologist, and radiation oncologist. Then the physicians meet for a wrap-up conference while the patient sees support services staff that can include a social worker, a genetic risk assessment counselor, a nutritionist, and other staff as appropriate. At the end of the clinic, the patient is given a treatment recommendation in a consultative format.

The breast cancer multidisciplinary



Bienes Cancer Center chief physicist Glaister Ayr (on L) with radiation oncologist Lav K. Goyal, MD (on R).

plinary breast case conference, which was previously held twice a month, is moving to a weekly schedule and nearly all breast cancer cases are presented prospectively.

Focus on Research

The Bienes Cancer Center participates in CCOP, CTSU, CALGB, RTOG, ACoSOG, and some industry trials. In addition, Holy Cross Hospital has a collaborative agreement with Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston that offers patients enhanced access to early phase clinical trials.

The cancer center's research office is staffed by a PhD nurse manager, three FTE research nurses, one FTE laboratory technician, one FTE dedicated research pharmacist, and one FTE regulatory staff member. The cancer center accrues approximately four percent of patients to clinical trials each year. Over the last four years, the clinical trials program has grown to include Phase I through Phase III trials, and currently has four open Phase IB trials.

Focus on Treating the Whole Patient

At the Bienes Cancer Center, patients and their families have access to a full complement of support services. Support staff includes a PhD-prepared social worker, nutritionists, financial counselors, and lymphedema and massage therapists. Cancer care supportive

services include a Spiritual and Palliative Care program staffed by an oncology-trained chaplain and an oncology-certified licensed clinical social worker, respectively. Patients and caregiver counseling services and support groups are available.

Focus on Reaching Out

The Bienes Cancer Center serves the local community and Broward County by providing screening and education programs throughout the year. The entire cancer team is very involved with the American Cancer Society, both as volunteers and as leadership members serving on the local unit Operating Board.

Focus on the Future

Next steps for the Bienes Cancer Center include continued integration and consolidation of services, with the development of additional disease-site-specific clinics. In October 2010, Holy Cross Hospital opened the Dorothy Mangurian Comprehensive Women's Center in Fort Lauderdale. The new women's center, which includes a diagnostic imaging suite, is designed to provide one-stop, state-of-the-art services in a comforting environment. Coordination between the new Women's Center and the Bienes Cancer Center is another opportunity to further ensure smooth care transition and streamlining of patient access to disease-site-specific multidisciplinary care. ☐