

spotlight

Torrance Memorial Medical Center Hunt Cancer Institute, Torrance, California



RN team building during Oncology Nursing Collaborative.

The Torrance Memorial Medical Center (TMMC) Hunt Cancer Institute, accredited by the American College of Surgeons (ACoS) as a Comprehensive Community Cancer Center since 1980, is one of only three centers in California to achieve the Commission on Cancer's Outstanding Achievement Award (2012).

TMMC serves the South Bay area of California, a coastal region of the southwest peninsula of Los Angeles County which boasts spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. Charlene Cottrell, RN, Director, emphasized that TMMC strives to offer excellence in both diagnostic services and treatment close to home, so patients do not need to go outside the community or seek out tertiary centers for the majority of their oncology care.

A Robust Oncology Service Line

All oncology care services are housed on the Torrance Memorial Hospital campus, a free-standing not-for-profit facility.

Outpatient infusion and medical offices are in separate buildings near the main campus. TMMC's radiation oncology

department is located in the basement level of the Outpatient Center. This department offers state-of-the-art technology, such as RapidArc®, and recently installed a brand new TrueBeam™ linear accelerator. By spring 2014, TMMC will offer stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) for brain and lung. For thoracic oncology patients, TMMC recently added navigational bronchoscopy and endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS) to treatment options; TMMC uses a da Vinci Surgical System® for prostate and gynecologic procedures.

Infusion services are delivered in two locations. The Specialty Center Infusion unit is the dedicated home for outpatient chemotherapy and is supplemented by the 4E outpatient unit located within the hospital. Inpatient chemotherapy and biotherapy infusions are given in the 2 North Lemkin Pavilion, which is located in the main hospital.

Breast care services are housed on the hospital campus in the Polak Breast Diagnostic Center, which is recognized by the American College of Radiology (ACR) as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence. It is also ACR-accredited in stereotactic breast biopsy and ultrasound and ultrasound breast biopsy and offers 3D mammography. High patient volumes necessitate a weekly tumor board for this disease site. The breast center has three satellite locations in Carson, Manhattan Beach, and Rolling Hills Estates.

Coordinated Care

Since not all oncology services are delivered in one place, coordination of care is a top priority for staff.

Patient navigation services help ensure coordination of multidisciplinary care from diagnosis through survivorship. TMMC's navigation services began with breast cancer patients—the center's largest disease site—in 2006. The Breast Diagnostic Center has two dedicated nurse navigators. Newly-diagnosed breast cancer patients are given the opportunity, via the nurse navigators, to meet with a medical oncologist prior to any scheduled treatment or surgery. Cottrell said this helps patients to better understand their diagnosis, feel more informed in making treatment decisions, and reduce some of their initial panic.

Navigation services are also available for lung cancer patients, radiation oncology, head and neck patients, and newly-diagnosed colon cancer patients.

Community-Wide Survivorship Care

TMMC continues its coordinated care into survivorship. The South Bay Survivorship Consortium is a robust, community-wide survivorship effort. Initiated in 2009, the program came out of a partnership with UCLA, TMMC, a medical oncology private physician practice, and a large managed-care group. As these providers treated the same patient population in the South Bay area, the Consortium looked at how it could bring survivorship services to the community and educate patients and private practice physicians on issues related to survivorship and survivor follow-up care.

The Consortium also develops educational programs for the community based

Select Support Services

- Cancer Resource Center
- Oncology rehabilitation
- Social work
- Navigation
- Support groups

Number of analytic cases seen in 2012:
1,645

on survivors' requests. Past programs have covered:

- Nutrition and cancer myths
- Sexuality and self esteem
- Cancer and the law
- Genetics and cancer
- Complementary therapies
- Management of post-treatment fatigue.

Cottrell notes that it takes a lot of coordination and dedication to offer community-wide survivorship services.

Oncology Nursing Collaborative

When TMMC received patient feedback that fragmented care occurred across settings along the care continuum, oncology nursing leaders took up the challenge. In 2007 a collaborative was organized to focus on improving inter-departmental communication with a goal to foster a positive patient experience by identifying patient barriers to care. Nurses representing inpatient oncology, outpatient infusion, palliative care, radiation oncology, the breast center, and the Cancer Resource Center meet monthly to discuss how to improve the cancer patient experience. These meetings have led to shared problem-solving, process improvement projects geared toward patient education and safety, and interdisciplinary projects to address issues with navigation, rehabilitation, and other supportive services. Patients benefit from the identification of barriers to care, which has led to greater efficiency of care delivered, and overall improved patient education and satisfaction.

Pain Management Quality Improvement Study

TMMC also seeks to improve processes that affect the patient experience. In 2012 inpatient oncology nursing staff initiated a performance improvement project in response to pain, patient experience, and patient satisfaction Hospital Care Quality Information (HCAHPS) scores. Results identified a knowledge gap in pain



assessment and pain management strategies and a need for a Pain Resource Nurse (PRN). Outcomes of this project (as of September 2013) include 20 identified PRNs, the launch of a pain education series, and a receipt of a grant to cover the costs of educational materials.

TMMC recently completed another quality improvement project for the Oncology Rehabilitation program. This project assessed patient satisfaction and outcomes. Results from the project were used to improve care coordination and develop strategies to improve patient quality of life.

TMMC also plans to implement distress assessment tools site-wide in order to refer patients to the Cancer Resource Center and oncology social work if needed.

CT Lung Screening Program

In 2011 TMMC began offering a CT Lung Screening Program for early detection of lung malignancy. The program brings together a multidisciplinary group of medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, dedicated surgeons, nurse navigators, and radiologists. The partnership between

various departments and radiology ensures that any positive CT scan will be sent to a nurse navigator, who then follows up with both primary care physicians and patients to make sure that no one falls through the cracks. As of July 2013, about 30 patients had undergone screening.

Expansion of Services

Expected to open in 2015 on the Torrance Memorial Hospital campus, the new Lundquist Tower will house all inpatient services. A brand new inpatient oncology unit on the 7th floor will overlook the Palos Verde area of Los Angeles. According to Cottrell, nursing staff, physicians, and donors were heavily involved in the design of the entire floor, especially the patient suites.

The 390,000-square-foot expansion will also feature 256 private patient rooms, 12 operating rooms, and 18 surgery and interventional treatment rooms. With Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) accredited staff on the design team, the construction will incorporate environmentally-friendly elements, such as sustainable building materials, natural lighting, and water efficient landscaping. 