

spotlight

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic Cancer Center, Houston, Texas



Mavis Parrott Kelsey, MD, was born in Deport, Texas, on October 7, 1912, to John Roger and Bonita Kelsey. He was named after his mother's friend, Mavis Graham, who saved Bonita's life while they were college roommates. When Bonita's mother learned what had happened, she suggested Bonita's firstborn child be named Mavis, and so it was. In a remarkable stroke of faith, Dr. Kelsey would grow up to become one of the most influential physicians of his generation and be responsible for saving

countless lives. He would live to be 101 years of age, having spent the better part of a century revolutionizing health care delivery in the Houston area. His legacy lives on through the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic, which he founded in 1949.

A Legacy Built on Accessibility

Although the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic offered infusion therapy for years, the incorporation of their cancer service line did not happen until April 2015. Once established, the Kelsey-Seybold

Clinic Cancer Center operated with a clear objective in mind: increasing access for patients with cancer in the greater Houston region. The primary vehicle for achieving that goal has been the strategic establishment of sites across their catchment area. "We established our main campus location with a vision to bring as many cancer specialties and services to our patients as possible, including surgeons specializing in cancer treatment as well," said Bobby Lester, senior director for Cancer Services at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic. "The goal is that 90% of





Houstonians will live within 15 minutes of our smaller clinics, and within 30 minutes of a campus.”

The cancer program currently has 2 main campuses at which patients with cancer have access to oncology/hematology and radiation oncology services, as well as infusion services and a full-service pharmacy. The cancer program has 3 more smaller clinics that only offer oncology/hematology services, however, according to Lester, these sites will become hubs within the next year. “Our Fort Bend, Bay Area, and Memorial Village locations, are all undergoing large expansions,” he explained. Lester credits this growth to Kelsey-Seybold Clinic Cancer Center’s drive to deliver value-based care to patients close to home. “Throughout this development process, we have been working to match our offerings to the needs of residents,” he said. “For our cancer services team, we are acutely aware of how difficult it can be for a patient with cancer to receive care close to their home or place of work.”

The person-centered ethos the cancer program prides itself on also dictates how quickly patients are seen. According to Lester, the patients with cancer who present at the center come almost exclusively through referrals from other Kelsey-Seybold Clinic

specialties. “Specialties will make an internal referral that will be managed by our nurse navigation team who then intake the patient and schedule them accordingly with our providers,” Lester said. “We focus on getting patients seen as quickly as possible, with most patients being able to be seen by a physician within a week.”

Delivering Comprehensive Cancer Care

The cancer program has maintained [OOPI certification](#) with a plan in the pipeline to obtain [APEX accreditation](#). At each campus location, oncology/hematology and infusion services are in adjacent spaces while radiation oncology is located on a separate floor directly below. Infusion suites have private bays with between 18 chairs to 29 chairs. Suites are staffed by 19 registered nurses, 2 charge nurses, and 8 medical assistants. There is also a dedicated sterile compounding pharmacy, which is staffed by 11 pharmacists and 12 pharmacy technicians. According to Lester, 1 pharmacist is embedded in each infusion suite to provide patient education. Radiation oncology is staffed by 3 radiation oncologists who service both campus locations, 3 registered nurses, 2

medical assistants, 11 radiation therapists, 4 dosimetrists, and 4 physicists. While oncology /hematology includes 22 registered nurses, 3 charge nurses, 14 medical assistants, 2 oral chemotherapy registered nurses, and 11 medical doctors.

The cancer program offers a range of treatment options including external beam radiation only using photons or electrons with a range of different modalities: 3D, IMRT/VMAT, SBRT, and SRS/SRT. In addition, patients have access to surface-guided radiation therapy (SGRT), deep inspiration breath hold (DIBH), atypical partial breast irradiation (APBI), and image-guided radiation therapy (IGRT). Understanding the need to support patients as they access the cancer care continuum, the cancer program has an embedded nutritionist, and 3 social workers to service their primary locations. “We have our social workers physically at each of our locations along with the option of meeting with patients virtually,” Lester said. “With our nutritionist, we currently have one that supports the cancer program, and she rotates between our 2 largest clinics with the ability to meet with patients virtually as well.” The cancer program also provides patients with a prescription delivery service, as well as a transportation service.

Clinical Trials

Clinical trials are an important part of the cancer program's mission, and patients can access trials through the Kelsey Research Foundation—the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic's non-profit affiliate established in 1956. "All patients are screened for eligibility in currently available clinical trials by the Kelsey Research Foundation team members," Lester said. The Kelsey Research Foundation staff attend weekly interdisciplinary team meetings at the cancer program. As patient cases are discussed, members of the research team consider if a clinical trial would be an appropriate option for that patient, which allows for immediate discussion with the presiding physician.

The current portfolio of trials includes diagnostic studies aimed at improving early detection of cancer, therapeutic trials testing groundbreaking treatment and adjuvant therapies, and lifestyle interventions that

improve recovery and reduce the risk of recurrence after successful treatment. Further, the Kelsey Research Foundation is engaged in strategic partnerships with other cancer programs to develop algorithms coupled with advanced imaging to identify and monitor those at higher risk of developing certain cancers usually diagnosed at later stages and with high mortality rates. The foundation remains committed to ensuring that clinical trials are representative of the diversity of the communities the patients they hope to treat reside within. Lester takes pride in this and other accomplishments the cancer program has managed to accomplish in a relatively brief period of time.

"I would say that we are most proud of the embodiment of our organization's strong values that have placed us a leading health care organization within the Houston market," Lester said. "These values include continuous

improvement in high quality care and high patient experience, all while having strong employee engagement." Lester asserts that through the rapid growth the cancer program has maintained the same passion for delivering comprehensive and equitable cancer care. "Our model is geared toward having an engaged staff to provide high quality care, and because of our focus on access and efficiency, I think we show that we have personalized relationships and care with our patients," Lester said. That model continues to build on the legacy of a man named after his mother's hero. **OI**

