



Providence Hospital and Medical Centers Providence Cancer Center

Committed to Coordinated Care and Clinical Trials

To cite this article: (1998) Providence Hospital and Medical Centers Providence Cancer Center, *Oncology Issues*, 13:1, 14-15, DOI: [10.1080/10463356.1998.11904728](https://doi.org/10.1080/10463356.1998.11904728)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463356.1998.11904728>



Published online: 18 Oct 2017.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 2



View related articles [↗](#)

Providence Hospital and Medical Centers Providence Cancer Center

Committed to Coordinated Care and Clinical Trials

The recent incorporation of oncology as a product line within the Providence Cancer Center at Providence Hospital and Medical Centers in Southfield, Mich., has created a renewed commitment by the institution to treat-

ing the physical aspects of cancer as well as the emotional and spiritual needs of patients, according to Carol Mastalerz, M.S.N., R.N., A.O.C.N., director of oncology services. Architectural designs for both a renovated cancer center in Southfield and a new cancer center in Novi are

being developed to embody spiritual concepts of healing. Each center will devote physical space with areas dedicated for patient meditation and reflection. Gardens, reflecting pools, and art galleries, as well as more interactive activities such as a computer library and art and music ther-

The Cancer Care Program at Providence Hospital and Medical Centers offers a comprehensive range of coordinated inpatient and outpatient cancer care services from research and diagnosis to treatment, including surgery, radiation and medical oncology, pain management, education, and support services. In 1997 a study published by HCIA and Mercer in Modern Health Care Magazine named Providence one of the "Top 100" hospitals in the United States.

VITAL STATISTICS

Total hospital bed size: 459

Dedicated cancer unit beds: 32

Number of analytic cancer patients seen each year: 1,000

Managed care penetration in the state: 22.4 percent

PATIENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Annual prostate cancer screening and breast cancer awareness programs are offered to patients and the community.

- A complement of support services, including pain control, nutrition counseling,

social work, and pastoral care, is offered to patients.

- Learning About Cancer is an educational program offered quarterly to newly diagnosed cancer patients and their families. Members of the oncology team, including a physician, clinical nurse specialist, dietitian, and social worker, present information and answer patients' questions about cancer and cancer treatment in a small group setting.

- The "Shared Decision Making" project, a partnership between Providence and Blue Cross of Michigan, makes available to patients materials on cancer via a laser disk computer housed in Providence's Health Education Resource Library.

- Providence participates in Cancer Survivors' Day, Breast Cancer Awareness Week, Race for the Cure, ACS's Relay for Life, and other community events.



apy, will allow patients to express their fears and help them work toward emotional and spiritual healing. "The physical layout will represent inclusion of spirituality and healing into the cancer treatment process," Mastalerz said.

Both centers will continue in the Providence tradition of providing compassionate, comprehensive components of quality cancer care, including radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and pain management services, for patients in one setting. By assembling and coordinating all the players involved in a patient's treatment plan, Providence improves quality of care by significantly decreasing the interval between diagnosis and treatment for patients with cancer.

Providence's coordinated approach to care includes the establishment of six multidisciplinary working groups in the areas of head and neck, lymphoma/leukemia, breast, lung, gynecologic, and genito-urinary cancers. In these working groups, clinicians review patient cases in a forum setting, which allows for validation of a patient's initial diagnosis and treatment plan. An oncology nurse case manager coordinates the patient's work-up, such as bone or CT scans, and schedules any follow-up treatment or procedures. As a result, the interval between diagnosis and treatment at Providence for certain types of lung cancer, for example, has decreased from six weeks to one week.

The key to timely initiation of a treatment plan, Mastalerz said, is more than building a collaborative framework. It means also having a dedicated staff member to guide patients through the complex array of treatment options and decisions. All working groups have a dedicated oncology nurse case manager to coordinate care for patients. Providence's Center for Breast Care, for example, connects patients to a nurse who specializes in breast cancer. The nurse acts as a liaison for patients by scheduling appointments and tests, serving as an information resource, and reporting test results to the Breast Cancer Working Group. The working group is part of a breast program that is comprehensive in nature and provides services from diagnosis through treatment. A multidisciplinary

group of physicians, including a surgeon, medical and radiation oncologists, and a plastic surgeon, see patients within a 48-hour period. The program aims to get results to patients as quickly as possible to help them navigate the various treatment options.

A COMMITMENT TO CLINICAL TRIALS

Clinical research must go hand in hand with good, personal patient care, according to Dr. Muhyi Al-Sarraf, medical director of Providence Cancer Center. The scope of the Providence Cancer Program and its commitment to clinical trials has attracted physicians distinguished in the field of research such as Dr. Al-Sarraf and others from such leading institutions as the Mayo Clinic, Wayne State University, and the University of Michigan.

The Clinical Trials Office is the hub for clinical research activity at Providence Cancer Center. The office links information about clinical trials, which are available through Providence's full membership in the Southwest Oncology Group and affiliations with the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project and industry-sponsored trials, to physicians, their office staff, and patients.

The Clinical Trials Office represents a long-standing commitment on the part of physicians and administration to clinical research. The office serves as an extended support mechanism for physicians and their office personnel, overseeing the enormous amount of paperwork, education, and follow-up necessary for a successful clinical trials effort.

The office is staffed by four FTEs, including one research nurse and three data managers. The research nurse reviews all cancer-related pathology reports within the institution. Similarly, on a daily basis she also reviews medical charts for all newly diagnosed cancer patients seen in a medical practice closely aligned with Providence Hospital. The research nurse alerts attending physicians about patient eligibility for clinical trials by flagging the medical charts of appropriate patients. The office recently added two physician extenders to the medical oncology practice to

assist with performing physicals, taking medical histories, teaching, and referrals.

The Clinical Trials Office is continually working to upgrade its documentation and research processes. The office conducts monthly clinical trials meetings with physicians and clinical trials staff to discuss accruals, monitors on trials that have been completed, and outcomes. The Providence clinical research program also has a strong focus on patient education. Patients are individually counseled about the benefits and risks of clinical trial participation. The office provides a variety of educational materials, and a video explaining clinical trials airs on the hospital's internal education channel. However, the entire team—nurses, residents, physicians, physician extenders, and social workers—is responsible for educating eligible patients, Mastalerz said.

PARTNERSHIPS TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

Providence Hospital and Medical Centers is committed to providing state-of-the-art treatment to the community. Providence Cancer Center is affiliated with the University of Michigan Cancer Center's Department of Radiation Oncology, one of the nation's top NCI-designated comprehensive cancer programs. The partnership allows Providence patients local access to many sophisticated treatment planning and radiation therapies. In collaboration with the university, Providence recently installed a linear accelerator with full computer control, allowing patients to be positioned on the table a single time throughout the entire sequence of their treatment.

Providence's commitment also extends to underserved women in the community. Through a project with the Oakland County Health Department, Providence Cancer Center provides free screening for breast and cervical cancer to 200 women a month. At this rate of screening, Mastalerz said, the likelihood of positive diagnosis is two per year. As part of its agreement with the health department, each year Providence Cancer Center bears the cost of treatment for two women diagnosed with cancer as a result of this screening effort. ■