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Responding to an Informed Community

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Responding to an Informed Community

The Marin Cancer Institute at Marin General Hospital (MGH) is located just north of the San Francisco Bay Bridge in Marin County, Calif., where the socioeconomic and educational status of the county's population ranks high relative to national figures. At the same time, the San Francisco Bay area has some of the highest rates of breast cancer in the country; in fact, Marin County has the highest rates in the entire Bay area. Such a combination results in a community that Cancer Program Director

Mimi Haberfelde, R.N., M.S., A.O.C.N., describes as "extremely proactive in its desire to stay informed in all aspects of cancer treatment."

In response to this need, the ACoS-accredited Marin Cancer Institute provides a full range of services along the continuum, including patient education. MGH and the Marin Cancer Institute have instituted several resources, both for current patients as well as family members and the general community. The CIRCLE Center offers a lending library of books, videos, audiotapes, medical jour-

nals, personalized Internet searches, and information on supportive services. The Marin B.R.E.A.S.T. Center is staffed by trained volunteers, most of whom are breast cancer survivors.

The Marin Cancer Institute's wide range of state-of-the-art diagnostic and treatment services is delivered by an interdisciplinary team of medical, radiation, and surgical oncologists, in addition to oncology nurse specialists, and a social worker, dietitian, and pharmacist dedicated to oncology. The Institute also offers a strong

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Marin General Hospital in Greenbrae, Calif., offers a full spectrum of diagnostic services, treatment, and education for people with cancer. Marin Cancer Institute provides an integrated program of care, promoting prevention and early detection while also providing treatment, rehabilitation, and supportive care. The Marin Cancer Institute collaborates with local organizations to bring lifestyle, education, screening, and prevention services to the community for an effective and long-lasting impact.

VITAL STATISTICS

- Total hospital bed size: 232
- Annual number of patients on NCI-approved protocols: 19
- Number of analytic cancer patients seen each year: 800
- Managed care penetration in the state: 49 percent

PATIENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- A Shared Care Unit offers a homelike environment for family

members and care partners.

- A Breast Cancer Resource Guide provides a listing of breast cancer services and resources available at MGH and other agencies and organizations in Marin County.
- "Ask the Expert" features monthly informal question and

answer sessions with local oncologists and surgeons on topics related to breast cancer.

- Healing and Meditation gardens, a specially designed Atrium Lobby, and rotating art exhibits provide patients a contemplative and uplifting atmosphere.



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research component, participating in more than sixty NCI-sponsored clinical research studies. Additionally, the Marin Cancer Institute is developing a patient advocacy program to provide accurate information about clinical research as well as the opportunity to meet individuals who have previously participated in clinical studies.

Interestingly, the same community that demands such a high level of service from MGH is also active in financially supporting its mission. Contributions and grants from national organizations such as the Susan G. Komen Foundation are supplemented by local donations from the community.

INTEGRATING MEDICAL INNOVATION AND HEALING

The Marin Cancer Institute and the Humanities Program at Marin General Hospital have a history of providing education, psycho-spiritual support, and access to art and complementary therapies for patients undergoing cancer therapy. By attending to the mind-body-spirit relationship, the goal is to strike a balance, according to Haberfelde. "Whether using medicine to the exclusion of the mind and spirit, or tending to the mind and the spirit to the exclusion of the body—neither approach completely meets the needs of patients," she said.

At MGH patients receive state-of-the-art cancer treatment while benefiting from a holistic approach. "Patients are provided tools to cope, both physically and emotionally, with the changes a cancer diagnosis can bring," Haberfelde explained.

A recent survey conducted by MGH found that overall the hospital has enjoyed patient satisfaction scores for physician care that are higher than the national average. Scores for medical outcomes and overall quality are also high, an indication of the hospital's success in "providing the highest standard of medical care well supported by both a comprehensive and holistic approach," stated Haberfelde.

The Humanities Program, which is available hospital-wide, offers individualized guided imagery, massage, and expressive art therapy sessions, while group sessions focus on Kripalu yoga, Ch'i-Gung breathing exercises, and cancer support groups incorporating art and imagery.

Patients are generally self-referred or referred to the program by their nurse or oncologist. According to Leslie Davenport, M.S., M.F.C.C., executive coordinator of the Humanities Program, MGH oncologists are some of the more staunch supporters of the program. Often an oncologist will accompany Davenport as she makes presentations to physicians across the hospital to talk about complementary therapy options and the services available to physicians and their patients. "Fortunately for us, our oncologists have really been the champions of the Humanities Program," Davenport stated.

A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK

Marin Cancer Institute is one of eight ACoS-accredited cancer programs in Sutter Health, the seventh largest health care network in the United States. Physicians and administrators from the programs meet monthly to share successes

and to collaborate on areas in need of improvement. The Marin Cancer Institute is participating in another system-wide improvement, the Breast Cancer Disease Management Project. This project relies on clinical indicator data from the eight ACoS hospitals to benchmark against themselves and each other. The data allow each facility to explore opportunities for improving breast cancer care.

Haberfelde and colleagues recently initiated a Sutter-wide effort to improve lymphedema services, especially for women at risk after axillary node dissection. A survey found that patients need more information about lymphedema prevention and patient education on self-care. The end result was a two-day conference hosted by the Marin Cancer Institute on understanding and improving lymphedema services.

The MGH Humanities Program also regularly collaborates with Sutter colleagues from the Institute for Health and Healing at the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco (CPMC) to develop workshops and services for patients. In addition, MGH and the rest of the Sutter network have access to outcomes data and other studies from the CPMC Complementary Medicine Research Institute.

These and other process improvement projects are just some of the many benefits the Marin Cancer Institute is able to offer to its patients. Through collaborative efforts with MGH, the Sutter Health Network, and the community at large, the Marin Cancer Institute provides comprehensive oncology care in a holistic setting. ☛