

Partnerships — Physicians, Nurses, and Social Workers

Florida Hospital Waterman Cancer Institute, at a Glance

Florida Hospital Waterman Cancer Institute, Tavares, Florida, is a 204-bed acute care facility with a case load of 500-799 cancer patients, of which 25-99 patients have chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML). To enhance the lives of patients with CML and address the many aspects of living with a chronic disease, we provide patients and caregivers the means to cope with their life-long struggle with cancer.

Florida Hospital Waterman Cancer Institute is one of four ACCC Community Resource Centers (CRCs) that are available to act as mentors and to assist ACCC-member programs by providing timely information, advice, and responses to questions about care for patients with CML. ACCC members can contact any CRC through the CML ASK (Answers, Solutions, Knowledge) online community by logging on to ACCC's MyNetwork at: www.accc-cancer.org/myNetwork.



Our Model

The medical oncologist is tasked with managing CML treatment, as well as helping patients cope with side effects. Our nurse practitioner and oncology nurses are the first-line providers who listen to patient concerns about side effects. Our social worker handles care coordination for all CML patients. For example, our social worker calls patients the day before their appointment, immediately when they miss an appointment and, if there's no answer, again the following day. If the patient cannot be reached by phone, the social worker follows up with a letter. In addition, clinical and support professionals are automatically notified if a patient misses an appointment.



Drug Therapy Management

We prescribe medicine one month at a time to monitor compliance. Nurses discuss medication and side effects, provide extensive education—in person and via handouts—about the therapy and side effects, and monitor lab work. If necessary, our social worker will check on the patient's home situation to identify challenges to adherence. Our specialty pharmacy helps patients manage side effects through the use of oral medications.

Multidisciplinary Care

Clinical and non-clinical staff attend our cancer conferences, which sometimes include physicians from other community practices. The specialists coordinate closely with the primary care physicians. Informal meetings on patient care keep the entire team apprised. We have low staff turnover—none in the last two years—so our patients and staff bond.

Financial Guidance and Assistance

Our social worker and financial counselor have a robust—and ever-growing—list of resources for patients who need assistance. Patients may be referred to the appropriate community agencies and/or to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Our team actively gathers information on assistance resources from national meetings, networking, pharmaceutical reps, and professional organizations, such as the Lake County Oncology Nursing Society.

Support Services

Our social worker's office is located in the waiting area, and patients are welcome to call or drop in. A monthly Leukemia & Lymphoma Society meeting (run by a nurse) is conducted onsite. We offer a general cancer support

group, as well as hosting a monthly Leukemia & Lymphoma Society support group. Other support services include pet therapy (“puppy day”); twice-weekly high teas, which create bonding and socialization in the waiting area; and pastoral care.

We provide extensive handouts to patients, including materials from the American Cancer Society and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. We also have a dedicated library and patients can access information about CML through the Cancer Institute's website.

Staff Training

Staff attend leukemia and lymphoma programs on site. Our physician lecture series has twice focused on CML. Most of our nurses also receive ongoing education through the Lake County Oncology Nursing Society.

Learn more about this project and explore resources, including podcasts and webinars at: www.accc-cancer.org/education/education-SPC-landing.asp.

