



UHS **STAY healthy**

SPECIAL CANCER ISSUE 2013

Coffee Break

Five days of CyberKnife therapy can cure prostate cancer

Body of Work

Pilot cancer survivorship program cares for the whole person

Quick Step

Jackie Verti is cancer-free after expedited diagnosis and treatment at the UHS Breast Center



Cancer Champions

Triathletes donate their medals to patients challenging cancer



Left to Right: PJ Messina, therapist, UHS Radiation Oncology; Betty Day, patient and medal recipient; Bill Day, Betty's husband; Diana Bean, BC Triathlon Club; Ed Desantis, BC Triathlon Club president; Sue Schultz, BC Triathlon Club; Kelley Hamlin, BC Triathlon Club and former Radiation Oncology patient.

Members of the Broome County Triathlon Club have donated more than 50 hard-earned medals to be given to UHS Radiation Oncology patients in recognition of the courage and strength cancer patients demonstrate. Once a patient completes a course of radiation treatment, they receive a graduation certificate from the staff along with a medal and a note from the club that says: "The race where we received this medal was very hard and challenging to finish, but it is nothing compared to what you have just completed!"

Betty Day, of Oxford, was the first patient to receive a medal donated from the club. PJ Messina, one of her radiation therapists, along with members of the Broome County Triathlon Club, presented Ms. Day with her completion

certificate and medal after six weeks of radiation therapy treatment. "The scariest part of the treatments was wondering how things would turn out," Ms. Day says.

One of the club's members recently completed treatment at UHS Radiation Oncology and is already back to running marathons.

>> READ MORE. The UHS survivorship program is also being offered through UHS Radiation Oncology. Turn to page 8 for more information on this innovative program that addresses the needs of the whole patient.

Break the Habit

Smoking is a major preventable cause of cancer

According to the American Lung Association, smoking-related diseases kill more than 393,000 Americans each year, and smoking causes harm to nearly every organ in the body. Further, of the 4,800 chemicals found in cigarette smoke, 69 are known carcinogens.

Chances are, if you smoke, you know you should quit — but quitting is never easy. The Tobacco Cessation Program at the UHS Stay Healthy Center in Oakdale Mall offers help, hope and encouragement for smokers ready to break the habit.

Laura Schutt, RN, explains that smokers should quit most obviously for health reasons, but also because they may see their insurance premiums rise as new rules are implemented as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. She and staff at the UHS Stay Healthy Center offer in-person group and one-to-one phone counseling tailored to each individual smoker's needs.

"We offer classes here at the center, and there is a free support group that meets every Monday from 6 to 7 p.m.," says Ms. Schutt, who adds that quitting smoking takes time, encouragement and sometimes the right medication to help with cravings and urges.

>> QUITTING TIME. Visit the UHS Stay Healthy Center in Oakdale Mall or call **763-5555** to learn about options for quitting smoking with help from UHS.



More than Managing

Support group offers hope for lymphedema patients

Lymphedema occurs when there is a blockage in or damage to the lymph system, often due to cancer treatment. This blockage prevents lymph fluid from draining, and as that fluid builds up, swelling occurs. Depending on where the damage is, one or both arms or legs may swell, causing pain and discomfort. Other parts of the body can be affected as well.

Theresa Hunter, PT, works to help patients manage lymphedema at UHS. "Our goal in physical therapy is to keep people as functional as possible after cancer treatment, and to reduce the impact of lymphedema through prevention," says Ms. Hunter.

Ruth Manzer, RN, OCN, cancer nurse coordinator, is the interim facilitator of the lymphedema support group, which meets monthly at UHS Vestal. "Lymphedema is a lifetime thing," Ms. Manzer says. "Patients have to devote one to two hours a day to managing their lymphedema. If they're not committed to managing it, it can really interfere with their lives."

The good news, according to Ms. Manzer, is that while managing lymphedema is a major commitment, it is doable. The monthly support group acts as a lifeline to both newly-diagnosed and long-term lymphedema patients, letting them share information on management techniques and new products.

>> JOIN US. The lymphedema support group meets the second Thursday of each month at UHS Vestal in the lobby of the Breast Center at 5:30 p.m. Light refreshments are served. Register by calling **763-5092** or visiting **www.uhs.net**. Patients and family members are welcome, and no physician referral is necessary.

"The support group is very encouraging to new members, and the bonds that people form can last a lifetime."

—Ruth Manzer, RN, OCN



Nancy Lopez shared golf tips for women at an event that also featured health information.

Fore!

400 attend event with golf legend Nancy Lopez

More than 400 women turned out at The Links at Hiawatha Landing Aug. 12, 2013, to meet LPGA legend Nancy Lopez. "Pearls of Wisdom with Nancy Lopez" was co-sponsored by UHS and Dick's Sporting Goods. Attendees at the outing learned about good health from a number of UHS healthcare professionals, then got some valuable tips on improving their golf game at a free clinic conducted by Ms. Lopez.

"We can always count on UHS and the many participating departments and providers to offer the latest in resources, including expert information on diet, exercise, physical therapy and preventive medicine for every stage of life," UHS gynecologist Nancy Shumeyko, MD, said at the event. "And when it comes to improving our golf swings, we can count on this evening's guest of honor, who has combined a remarkable career on the Tour with a devotion to the cause of fitness, well-being and lifelong health."

With 48 LPGA Tour victories and three Major Championships, Ms. Lopez is a World Golf Hall of Fame member and one of the most celebrated women in the sport. Today she is on the LPGA Legends Tour and also works to promote public awareness of a number of health issues, including arthritis and cardiovascular disease. She is an active contributor in the areas of heart and cancer research.



>> PICTURE PERFECT.

See more pictures of the event at *UHS Stay Healthy Magazine Online* at www.uhsstayhealthymag.com.



Our Cancer Team Stands Ready

Throughout UHS, our cancer care services cover the full spectrum of care, from screening to diagnosis, treatment to recovery. Our providers strive to ensure that each of the 1,000 patients who receive oncological care annually at UHS has a seamless path that's as comfortable and effective as possible every step of the way.

Our continuum of care features advanced protocols, enrollment in national clinical research at the local level and cutting-edge technologies, all delivered collaboratively by both UHS-employed providers and other practitioners in the community who are members of UHS' medical staffs.

But everywhere in our organization, the technical merits of the most sophisticated medicine available never outweigh the human touch in personalized, compassionate care. Our providers never lose sight of the significance of the total patient experience or the value of engaging each patient as part of the care team.

The commitment to quality across the board has led national medical agencies and organizations to take notice of our program and to recognize us with several awards for stellar performance. We have received high scores for the quality of our oncological programs from the American College of Surgeons and its Commission on Cancer. In addition, our Breast Center at UHS Vestal was the first to be qualified by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers.

What does this mean for patients and their families? It means that UHS is on the leading edge of understanding the biology of cancer and providing treatments that are more effective, more specific and less likely to produce side effects. It means that we are among those medical centers that are able to treat cancers more like chronic diseases, using the full battery of medications, surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and stereotactic radiosurgery to counteract the disease.

And, as Ruth Manzer, RN, OCN, our cancer nurse coordinator, has said, it means that we stay connected with our patients all along the way in their courageous battle against the condition. In her words, "We walk our patients through each step. We want them to have the emotional, psychosocial and spiritual support they need to reconnect with their lives."

Matthew J. Salanger
PRESIDENT & CEO OF UHS





Mr. Carmon had coffee with friends after each CyberKnife treatment.

>> FIVE DAYS OF CYBERKNIFE THERAPY CURED PROSTATE CANCER FOR WALTER CARMON

COFFEE break

WALTER CARMON, 80, IS A BUSY MAN. A trained U.S. Army engineer and retired heavy equipment repair and maintenance specialist, his days are filled with what he calls “playing” — fixing big rigs and other heavy equipment on his property. So when a biopsy confirmed his doctor’s suspicion of prostate cancer in the spring of 2011, he opted out of the recommended treatment — eight weeks of radiation therapy. His doctors were surprised at his decision, Mr. Carmon says, but he felt he had a good reason. “I know someone who had cancer and went for the eight-week tour. He was not a happy camper,” he says. “I told them I had no time for that.”

Meet Dr. Bayne

Depending on the type of cancer and extent of the disease, men with prostate cancer may have a number of treatment options, such as surgery, hormonal therapy and/or radiation, including a short-term course of stereotactic radiotherapy with CyberKnife. Mr. Carmon's search for options led him to UHS' CyberKnife Center of New York in Johnson City, located conveniently close to his home in Endicott.

Fast and Effective

CyberKnife uses three-dimensional image-guided technology to pinpoint localized tumors, and delivers high-dose radiation to destroy cancer or halt its growth. The UHS CyberKnife Center was the first in New York State when it opened in 2005, and the UHS CyberKnife team, overseen by UHS Radiation Oncology, has treated patients for prostate cancer since 2008.

While the patient is lying down, CyberKnife directs a painless beam of radiation at the tumor from multiple angles and with exacting precision. This reduces potential damage to the surrounding tissues, allowing doctors to use a very high dose of radiation and shortening treatment time from many weeks to five consecutive days, says Rashid Haq, MD, medical director of Radiation Oncology at UHS.

The combination of intensity and precision increases the potential for controlling or eradicating the disease, and reduces the long-term side effects of treatment, including urinary and rectal dysfunction, he says. "There has been an evolution in the way we treat this disease," Dr. Haq explains. "CyberKnife has opened up possibilities for patients who want to have a non-invasive, short course of treatment with transient side effects; something that no other treatment can offer at this time."

Research data supports CyberKnife as an effective option for prostate tumor radiotherapy. A recently published report of more than 300 prostate cancer patients treated with CyberKnife found that 97 percent of those in the low-risk range and 91 percent in the intermediate-risk range were cancer-

free five years post-procedure, says Dr. Haq. UHS data to date mirrors these results, he adds. "In five years, the CyberKnife Center of New York has treated 145 prostate cancer patients, with 99 percent of patients seeing dramatic drops in their prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood values, a diagnostic marker for prostate cancer."

Time for Treatment

Once a patient is approved for Cyber-Knife therapy, a radiation oncologist and urologist team maps out a plan of action. Candidates for CyberKnife therapy must have prostate cancer that is considered low to intermediate risk, and organ-confined. They cannot have a history of prior radiation treatment.

Dr. Haq and UHS urologist Beng Jit Tan, MD, PhD, oversaw Mr. Carmon's treatment in June 2011. About two weeks prior to the procedure, Dr. Tan injected four tiny gold markers into Mr. Carmon's prostate gland. These markers allow the CyberKnife to precisely track the gland during the course of treatment, and direct the radiation at the target, minimizing the exposure to the bladder and rectum.

On each of the five treatment days, Mr. Carmon lay on his back with his legs in a stabilizing mold and watched

a movie for about 45 minutes. He says he felt no discomfort whatsoever, and walked out of the center and headed straight to his favorite coffee shop when finished. Starting on day five, he had some bowel and urinary urgency that continued for about two weeks after the last treatment, a common side effect. Some patients also feel fatigued, but this was not apparent with Mr. Carmon. His wife, Patsy, was impressed at the level of comfort he experienced and how his schedule never changed. "When he'd come home from treatment, I thought he'd be tired out, especially by the end of the week. But he'd come home and out he'd go, just like he always did. I was quite surprised."

Two years after treatment, Mr. Carmon continues to enjoy repairing heavy equipment on a daily basis. His post-treatment PSA has dropped to a very low level, and his doctors say his cancer is gone. He has experienced no lasting side effects, and says he now recommends the UHS CyberKnife Center of New York to other men. "Dr. Tan and Dr. Haq were great, and the technicians and the staff were fantastic. They tell you they will take care of you and they do. I was very comfortable, and everything has turned around," Mr. Carmon says. "I can truly say that they saved my life." SH



>> **CALL TODAY.** Dr. David Bayne is now accepting new patients. To make an appointment, call **763-8101** or visit www.uhs.net/findadoc.

“There has been an evolution in the way we treat this disease.”

— Rashid Haq, MD

>> **WATCH AND LEARN.** Watch a video demonstration of CyberKnife at *UHS Stay Healthy Magazine Online* at www.uhsstayhealthymag.com.

QUICK step

>>UHS BREAST CENTER EXPEDITES ANSWERS FROM DIAGNOSIS THROUGH RECOVERY

IF SOMETHING NEEDS DOING, Jackie Verti gets it done. That's how she rolls — at the office, at home with her husband and four children, and certainly when it comes to her health. So when this 46-year old dynamo's mammogram raised suspicions, she wasted no time making an appointment with UHS breast surgeon Camelia Lawrence, MD, at the Breast Center at UHS Vestal.

Dr. Lawrence studied the abnormality in Ms. Verti's mammogram and recommended a biopsy, which was completed that same afternoon. In less than 24 hours, the biopsy results were in. Ms. Verti had breast cancer. "Dr. Lawrence saw right away that I'm not someone who waits around. I wanted to do whatever was necessary for a full recovery, and I wanted to do it as quickly as possible," Ms. Verti recalls. Respecting her patient's drive to survive, Dr. Lawrence performed her patient's bilateral mastectomy 20 days after diagnosis.

A year later, Ms. Verti is exactly where she wants to be — celebrating cancer-clean checkups. She's also now able to look back and talk about those angst-filled days between diagnosis and surgery, which included pre-surgery procedures, meetings with oncologists and consultations with a plastic surgeon about breast reconstruction. "What's amazing is that I saw so many people but never made a single appointment," she stresses. "The Breast Center team took care of everything. You have no idea what a blessing that was."

The personal attention Ms. Verti received is business as usual at the Breast Center. "Our multidisciplinary approach lets us move patients through the system so they're never alone and every medical resource links to the next resource," Dr. Lawrence explains. Although, the surgeon adds, the system is never systematic. "It's an

individualized process for each patient because everyone copes differently with a breast cancer diagnosis. We understand that, and it makes our approach unique."

Center of Attention

Creating a patient-centered continuum of care took more than great medical minds and gumption. It also took bricks and mortar. "When UHS opened the Breast Center at the Vestal location in 2012, that brought the breast care clinical and surgical pieces together under one roof, which closed any gaps between screening, diagnosis and treatment," says Dr. Lawrence.

With radiologists, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, geneticists, pathologists, nurse practitioners, technologists, breast surgeons and other experts in early detection of breast cancer working side-by-side,

the result is a seamless loop of care, including mammography, ultrasonography, breast MRI, image-guided core biopsies, cytopathology, lymphedema services and lab services. "The team — including a breast surgeon who is on site at all times — is always ready. No woman ever has to wait for the care she needs," Dr. Lawrence explains.

In addition to reducing patient anxiety, the Breast Center's coordinated continuum of care also reduces time between a positive diagnosis and targeted intervention. "Time is of the essence when dealing with breast cancer, and the sooner we have a diagnosis, the sooner intervention begins," Dr. Lawrence stresses.

Expeditionary biopsy results in particular give UHS medical and radiation oncologists a head start on designing and scheduling individualized post-surgery

>> **GET CHECKED.** Mammography is available at four UHS locations. Visit www.uhs.net/breast-health to get more information about breast cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment at UHS.



Ms. Verti is now cancer-free thanks to rapid diagnosis and initiation of treatment.

“The Breast Center team took care of everything. You have no idea what a blessing that was.”

—Jackie Verti

treatment plans, including chemotherapy and radiation. “The core biopsy tells us the breast tumor classification, and oncologists use this information to identify the best treatment protocol for that kind of tumor,” Dr. Lawrence emphasizes. “With the multidisciplinary system we’ve established, our oncologists receive the same biopsy results I do and treatment plans begin without any time gaps.”

An Eye on the Future

State-of-the-art screening, diagnosis and treatment capabilities that deliver advanced technology and medical information consistently prompt UHS breast cancer patients, like Ms. Verti, to describe the Breast Center’s level of care as “amazing.” Earning this level of patient satisfaction is the Center’s top

priority. However, ongoing peer recognition as a true visionary in breast care is also creating quite the buzz.

For example, the Breast Center participates in The American Society of Breast Surgeons Nipple Sparing Mastectomy Registry, which gives UHS breast cancer patients access to the latest advancements in mastectomy and leading-edge reconstruction procedures. In addition, UHS recently received approval as a National Cancer Institute Affiliate. “This allows our medical oncology group and our patients to participate in certain national breast cancer trials,” Dr. Lawrence says. “These trials are the cornerstone of emerging treatment modalities. Participating in these trials puts us among an elite group of medical centers that will be ready to meet the future at full speed.” **SH**

Super Surveillance

The UHS Breast Center initiated a multidisciplinary high-risk surveillance program designed to identify, counsel and manage women genetically predisposed to breast or ovarian cancer. “By identifying these women, we can take proactive steps to reduce certain risks and either prevent the disease or detect the cancer at a much earlier point,” explains Camelia Lawrence, MD, breast surgeon at the Breast Center. “With breast cancer, the clock is ticking, and we know that early detection leads to a better prognosis and improved chance of cure.”

Patients become part of the Breast Center high-risk surveillance program because of personal medical indicators or a family history of breast or ovarian cancer. The process begins by calculating a patient’s cancer risk and then recommending proactive screening, which may include a clinical breast exam twice a year. For those with a greater than 20 percent risk, the American Cancer Society recommends an MRI as the screening modality. In addition, there may be a discussion about genetic counseling, routinely performed by UHS partner Ferre Institute.

“When you think about personalized care, that includes a family health history,” explains Luba Djurdjinovic, MS, Ferre Institute genetic counselor. “That history prompts a discussion about underlying low-to-high-risk inherited risk factors. That’s where genetic testing comes in.”

>> **WEB EXCLUSIVE.** Genetic testing can bring up more questions than it answers. Is testing for the breast cancer gene right for you? How do you decide? If you get tested, what do you do with the results? Read more at *UHS Stay Healthy Magazine Online* at www.uhsstayhealthymag.com.

BODY of work

>>PILOT CANCER SURVIVORSHIP PROGRAM CARES FOR THE WHOLE PERSON



Ms. Manzer helps patients get all the care and services they need to beat cancer and feel their best during treatment.

cancer patients and their family members face. It's an important part of caring for the whole patient," says Ruth Manzer, RN, OCN, cancer nurse coordinator.

Even tapping into these services is seamless, Ms. Manzer explains. "The oncology staff is proactive. Patients are asked if they would like to talk with a social worker, and they receive a mobility evaluation within two weeks of starting treatment. We also find that many cancer patients benefit from time with a dietician."

Because UHS views these services as vital for a healthy mind, body and spirit, the consultations are free to cancer patients moving through radiation

treatment, and all patient evaluations are conducted in the Radiation Oncology Department in conjunction with scheduled radiation therapy appointments. If further treatment is necessary, appointments are scheduled in the therapy department.

>> **HOLISTIC HELP.** For more information about the cancer survivorship program, support groups and other programs that can benefit patients with cancer and their families, call Ms. Manzer at **763-5151** or visit www.uhs.net.

A proactive stance means that issues are often addressed well before a problem arises, says occupational therapist Nicole Keibel, OTR/L, LMT, CLT. "We want to empower patients with knowledge so they can maintain meaningful activities of daily life. That may mean preparing a nutritious meal, doing a little laundry, walking the dog or combating fatigue with exercise. In every case, the earlier we deal with a dysfunction, the better our results."

Pulling all these services into one seamless loop that addresses a patient's total well-being is a forward-thinking approach to cancer care, and the UHS Cancer Survivorship Committee is watching the pilot program's results. "We're looking at efficacy and how each patient's quality of life is affected," Ms. Manzer says. "Results are already impressive, and I'm hopeful that we'll roll these services out beyond Radiation Oncology." **SH**

According to the National Cancer Institute, an estimated 40 percent of all cancer patients report significant distress after diagnosis, which can trigger extreme fatigue, inability to cope with treatment side effects, difficulty maintaining a healthy diet, trouble with daily tasks and additional symptoms that can potentially derail recovery.

Determined to help cancer patients better manage symptoms, the UHS Cancer Survivorship Committee enhanced its cancer program with a holistically-focused pilot program, currently serving patients being treated at UHS Wilson Medical Center's Radiation Oncology Department. The pilot program's goal

is to simplify and expedite patient access to providers such as physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, dieticians and meditation guides, as needed and if desired. "These services help reduce the stress and confusion all

A Day Off from Cancer

More than 100 cancer patients and survivors, along with their families, celebrated life at the Cancer Survivors' Celebration at the Binghamton Zoo on August 24. The event was planned as a relaxing afternoon for families — including children and grandchildren of patients — to enjoy time away from cancer treatment and included a band, a balloon-animal maker, a magician and a barbecue lunch. Admission to the zoo was included in the free event.



The popular event provided entertainment for patients and their families.



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