



SPECIAL CANCER
ISSUE 2018

Stay Healthy

YOUR RESOURCE FOR HEALTHY
LIVING AND WELLNESS

Support System

UHS cancer support services help patients
from diagnosis through survivorship

WELCOME BACK

Oncology services
return to UHS
Chenango
Memorial Hospital

TEAMING UP

A new partnership
brings advanced
urologic cancer
treatment, and more,
to UHS



We Attack Cancer From All Sides



Nationwide, a revolution is taking place in how we think about cancer. Just a few decades ago, cancer treatment was mostly reactive. Therapies were often difficult and associated with many quality-of-life issues. But today, as reported by the National Institutes of

Health, “we are in a new era where cancer therapy is more proactive, more personalized and less toxic. Plus, effective screening programs have saved thousands of lives.”

For those of us who work in healthcare, and especially for the cancer patients we serve, that translates to a great sense of optimism. As the NIH notes, “Cancer is an enemy that requires an attack from all sides,” and we have taken up the challenge.

This is what motivated us to select Mayo Medical Laboratories as our primary reference laboratory, giving us access to exceptional testing resources and clinical expertise for the most complicated cases. It has also motivated us to work to restore cancer specialty services to UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital. On Nov. 1, we opened a new oncology clinic at the Norwich hospital to serve the needs of Chenango County residents. Another way we stand up to cancer is by helping patients and their families cope with the many everyday challenges brought on by the disease. These individuals benefit from “Sock Out Cancer,” an initiative formed especially to help people navigate the road to recovery by giving them access to financial assistance.

In this issue of *UHS Stay Healthy* magazine, and at our Stay Healthy Center at the Oakdale Mall, our cancer care program and our website (nyuhs.org), we are pleased to provide our community with information about all of the cancer care services we provide. Our goal is to be a continuing community resource for education, diagnosis, treatment, recovery and survivorship. We are ready and able to fight cancer from every side, and to stand with you always, on *your* side.

John M. Carrigg
PRESIDENT & CEO OF UHS



Welcome Back

Oncology services return to UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital

UHS is excited to announce that oncology services have returned to UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital. We have been eager to restore the services so that patients in the community can once more receive potentially lifesaving treatments close to home.

“Our first priority is always to offer the best possible care and service at UHS, Broome Oncology and now Chenango Memorial Hospital, and to ensure that your experience with us is of the highest clinical quality,” says Drake Lamien, MD, President and CEO, UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital.

Services exist as before, including consultations, hematology and oncology follow-up, lab work, chemotherapy and biotherapy infusions, and referrals for second opinions and to any specialty service. In addition, the hospital offers supportive care and phone access to oncology clinical staff.

Joseph Readling, MD, is the primary physician on-site, along with support from a skilled team which includes a pharmacist, nutritionist, registered nurses and support staff. The infusion suite has also been updated to give more space and privacy to patients.

The physicians and staff at UHS Chenango Memorial hope that having care close to home once again will alleviate patients’ financial and emotional burden of having to travel out of town.

“Working together for you, we will do everything we can to make your visit as caring, beneficial and worry-free as possible,” says Dr. Lamien.



LEARN MORE

To find out more about UHS oncology services, visit nyuhs.org/care-treatment/cancer.



MORE UHS CONTENT ONLINE

WEB-EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

Shilpa Sambidi, MD, a specialist in blood conditions, joins the team at the UHS Blood Disorders Center in Johnson City. Visit stayhealthyuhs.org.

GET THE LATEST NEWS

Sign up for our e-newsletter, direct to your inbox, to receive the latest UHS updates and stories from our community. Visit nyuhs.org.



a little help from our friends

UHS Foundation supports Sock Out Cancer

When someone is dealing with cancer—either as the person diagnosed or as a family member—the everyday costs and hurdles can be very challenging. The UHS Foundation has an integral role in “Sock Out Cancer,” a creative and generous community effort to smooth the way for many individuals and families dealing with these issues.

Led by the Binghamton-based Security Mutual Life Insurance Co., the project raises money through the sale of colorful socks and the presentation of a live concert. Rainbow-hued socks are sold at many stores and other locations around town for \$10 a pair, and William Close & The Earth Harp Collective put on a spectacular show at The Forum performing arts center.

Since its inception two years ago, “Sock Out Cancer” has raised \$148,945. Seventy-six cancer patients with financial challenges have directly received money for practical, nonmedical needs, such as transportation, utility bills, groceries, rent or mortgage payments. The Foundation administers the program and works with a committee to review applications for assistance.

“Cancer creates an enormous strain on an individual or a family, beyond the medical aspects,” says Cory Jacobs, executive director of the Foundation. “Sock Out Cancer helps people focus on caring for their loved ones instead of struggling with day-to-day living expenses.”

LEARN MORE

To make donations to the fund, go to nyuhs.org, click the Donate button and select Sock Out on the online donation form.

Better With Mayo

UHS partners with Mayo Medical Laboratories for advanced testing approaches



Quick, accurate testing is an important component of comprehensive patient services. Recently, UHS chose Mayo Medical Laboratories as its primary reference laboratory, which means UHS physicians can now collaborate with Mayo Clinic physicians, scientists and laboratory professionals to bring their high standard of patient-driven testing to the UHS community.



UHS Laboratories will continue to be the main laboratory testing location for most UHS patients. However, Mayo Medical Laboratories will handle specialized tests in close consultation with UHS physicians.

LEARN MORE

Partnering with Mayo Medical Laboratories is just one part of UHS’s commitment to bringing the best care to its patients. To learn more, visit nyuhs.org.

“We offer fast turnaround times for results and excellent customer service with UHS Laboratories,” says Jagmohan Sidhu, MD, medical director of the UHS Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. “Our close interaction between UHS Laboratories and Mayo Medical Laboratories professionals will extend this level of service to our community for more esoteric or specialized testing.”

Mayo Medical Laboratories partners with providers all over the world and performs approximately 24 million medical tests each year. These tests are integral to the care of about 4.5 million patients and represent more than 3,000 types of laboratory tests and pathology services.

Great Care Starts With Hiring Great People!

If you’d like to be appreciated and rewarded for your knowledge and skills, join our team today! UHS is a dynamic organization composed of talented and dedicated professionals just like you who want to make a difference in people’s lives. We have positions open in our hospitals, primary care offices, specialty care offices, walk-in centers, home care agencies and senior living centers.



nyuhs.org/careers for more information, or to apply.





UHS cancer support services help patients from diagnosis through survivorship

“I went to the support groups during treatment and there were other people who were behind me and some who were ahead of me in treatment.”

—BECKY MERGES

beyond causing devastating damage to the body, cancer often finds its way into every part of a patient’s life, from work to personal relationships to family. No one knows this better than Becky Merges, now 51, a music and chorus teacher at Owego Elementary School in Owego, New York. Ms. Merges was diagnosed with breast cancer in early 2014; however, her personal experience with the disease goes back many years.

“Both of my grandmothers had breast cancer,” says Ms. Merges. “And my best friend also died of breast cancer when she was 37, very young. I was with her when she passed and the one thing she asked me is to keep up on my mammograms.”

Ms. Merges kept her promise and had mammograms regularly starting at age 40. In 2014, about a week before she was due for a mammogram, she felt a lump in her breast.

“But, the next morning, the lump didn’t seem as obvious. We were going on vacation, so I tried not to think about it,” she says. “After I did the first mammogram

[a week later], they called me back and would not let me leave the building until I had another and a biopsy. Twenty-four hours later, I received the news that it was fairly aggressive cancer. I was very lucky to catch it so early.”

SUPPORT FROM THE START

Just eight days after her diagnosis, Ms. Merges started receiving treatment and was immediately referred to a nurse navigator. The navigator went through all of UHS’ cancer support services with her.

“I said, ‘Sign me up for everything,’ because we were floundering,” she says. “My husband, my two daughters and I had no idea what to do—at that point it was so new.”

Ms. Merges and her family leaned on UHS’ support network in different ways. One important service that UHS offers is a series of support groups that give cancer patients and their family members and loved ones a place to discuss and find relief for the stress that comes along with a cancer diagnosis.

“I went to the support groups during treatment and there were other people who were behind me and some who were ahead of me in treatment,” she says. “As much as you talk to your family, they don’t go through it and they don’t fully understand.”

One of Ms. Merges’ daughters also attended the children’s support group and still does to this day. In fact, Ms. Merges points to the ongoing availability of support groups and counseling as an important aspect of UHS’ services.

“The fact that I had access to a one-to-one counselor, and I still have access if I need it even though I’m four years out, is amazing,” she says.

+ **Left:** In addition to teaching music and chorus to elementary school students, Becky Merges works with students from grade six to 12 as a color guard coach.

+ **Bottom:** Merges, a cancer survivor, with her Owego Apalachin Central School District color guard as they prepare for a halftime performance.



PILLARS OF STRENGTH

Support groups can be an incredibly important part of dealing with cancer—whether it affects you or a family member or other loved one. UHS recognizes this and offers support groups for the different situations people affected by cancer find themselves in.

The **newly-diagnosed patient support group** is specific to people active in their cancer treatment. In addition to emotional support, the group discusses strategies for navigating the physical, mental and emotional toll cancer and its treatment can have on a patient’s life.

The **cancer survivor support group** helps cancer survivors transition from being unwell into wellness. In addition to discussions with other survivors, the group includes activities such as physical therapy, exercise, journaling, meditation and more.

The **children’s support group** meets once a month and gives children with loved ones receiving cancer treatment a space to meet and share their feelings. Children also participate in therapeutic activities such as arts and crafts.

BACK TO LIFE

UHS Social Worker and Support Group Facilitator Jennifer McCormick, LCSW, who worked with Ms. Merges, agrees that continuing support services, past treatment and through survivorship and returning to a more regular living situation, is key. However, she acknowledges that these services are sometimes underutilized.

“It’s something that people might not recognize is available long-term,” says Ms. McCormick. “[Ms. Merges] and I met regularly for a year after her treatment.”

Although Ms. Merges hasn’t received any treatment since August 2015 and her cancer has been in remission for about three years, she still feels stress related to the experience.

“Even though I’m perfectly healthy now, there are still mental issues,” she says.

“It’s like PTSD—you’re in a life-threatening situation. Every time you have a mammogram you get nervous, and they’re there to talk you through it.”



For more information on UHS cancer support services, call **763-6060**. For details about the HOPE exercise program, call **762-2178**.

Urologic cancers—such as prostate, kidney, bladder and testicular cancer—represent some of the most common cancers in America. As many as 1 in 9 men are affected by prostate cancer in their lifetime and, although it affects only about 1 in 250 men, the incidence of testicular cancer in the United States has steadily increased over the past few decades.

LATEST AND GREATEST

Diagnosing and treating these cancers requires a team of providers who understand and have access to the latest in technology. That is why UHS recently partnered with Upstate Urology, affiliated with Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. Upstate Urology of UHS has been formed to offer state-of-the-art treatment at UHS Wilson Medical Center.

“At UHS we offer the most up-to-date, cutting-edge treatments you can get,” says Nick Liu, MD, urologist at Upstate Urology of UHS. “It’s safe to say we can offer medical care that’s on a par with the top cancer centers.”

TEAMING *up*

A new partnership brings advanced urologic cancer treatment, and more, to UHS

When it comes to enhancing cancer and other types of urologic care, one of the most important advances at UHS is the use of robotic surgery. Robotic surgery allows for surgical treatments that are less invasive and more precise—making recovery easier for patients. It is currently available at Upstate Urology, and there are plans to bring it to UHS Wilson next year.

“We’re hoping to transform the treatment options in the Binghamton metropolitan area,” says Dr. Liu. “Bringing this brand-new type of surgical system to this area means many patients can benefit. People don’t need to travel to other hospitals; we can do these things right here.”



The Upstate Urology of UHS team. From left to right: Sergey Kravchick, MD; Cariann Brady, NP; Edward Ioffe, MD; Michael Castello, DO; and Nick Liu, MD.

“At UHS we offer the most up-to-date, cutting-edge treatments you can get.”
—NICK LIU, MD




DON'T WAIT. It can be embarrassing to talk about urologic issues, but they only get worse the longer you wait. Take your health into your own hands by making an appointment with Upstate Urology of UHS. Call **763-8101**.

MORE FOR MEN

In addition to bringing the latest in technology to UHS, Upstate Urology of UHS also brings a renewed focus on men’s health in general. One of the goals of the practice is to bring more attention to men’s health issues that may be overlooked, which include urologic cancers as well as issues such as low testosterone and chronic testicular pain.

“Low testosterone is recognized as an underdiagnosed issue in males and it can cause heart disease, stroke and other problems related to that,” says Dr. Liu. “And chronic testicular pain is a condition that’s very common, and very few urologists know how to treat it.”

Sergey Kravchick, MD, urologist at Upstate Urology of UHS, has seen a series of patients with chronic testicular pain and now they’re pain-free. “It’s very exciting and something that very few urologic centers can offer,” says Dr. Liu. 

TO SCREEN OR NOT TO SCREEN?



Nick Liu, MD

In the last few years, you may have seen prostate cancer screenings mentioned in the news as debate concerning their effectiveness continues. Prior to 2016, the U.S. Preventive Services Task

Force recommended against screenings, and in 2016 it changed its assessment to being neither for nor against screenings.

The truth is—like with many men’s health issues—whether you should get a prostate cancer screening is an individual determination you should make with your doctor. Nick Liu, MD, urologist at Upstate Urology of UHS, explains that talking to your provider about this and other issues is the most important step.

“We’re promoting men’s health,” says Dr. Liu, “and that includes an open discussion about prostate cancer for men between ages 55 and 89. For patients who are hesitant to have a biopsy, we have a lot of different options: PSA testing, MRI fusion biopsy of the prostate through the UroNav Biopsy System, looking at personal health information and even advanced blood tests through our collaboration with the Mayo Clinic.”

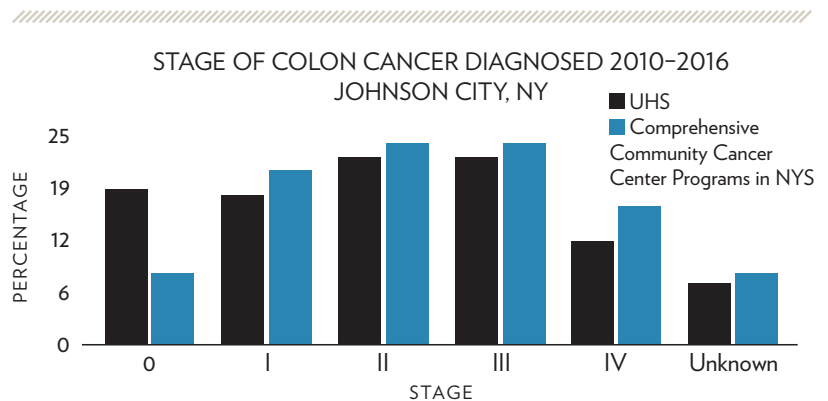
SCREEN *time*

In order to educate the Broome County community about the effectiveness and recommendations surrounding colorectal cancer screenings and other prevention efforts, the UHS Oncology Committee offered a free Colorectal Cancer Prevention Program in 2018. This program took the form of a seminar presented by UHS experts covering the advantages of screening, the likelihood of earlier diagnosis producing better outcomes, changes in screening preparation that make it easier to manage, surgical interventions including chemotherapy and minimally invasive techniques, and the role genetics and family history play in colorectal cancer risk. A total of 22 community members attended the Colorectal Cancer Prevention Program. In August 2018, UHS provided 60 individuals in Broome County who were in need of colorectal cancer screenings with free screenings, and all patients with positive results received appropriate follow-up care.

In New York state, colorectal cancer is one of the most frequently diagnosed cancers and the **second leading cause** of cancer deaths among men and women combined.

30% of the UHS Colorectal Cancer Prevention Program attendees improved their knowledge on colon cancer prevention.

UHS diagnoses colorectal cancer at an overall earlier stage than other community cancer centers, providing **better outcomes.**



UHS is designated as a Comprehensive Community Cancer Program by the American College of Surgeons. When comparing to all other Comprehensive Cancer Centers in New York state, UHS diagnosed a greater percentage of colorectal cancer cases at earlier, more treatable stages due to an aggressive screening program.

©2018 National Cancer Database (NCDB) / Commission on Cancer (CoC)

read more
online!

Visit stayhealthyuhs.org to read the current issue as well as web exclusives. Share the site with family and friends. To receive the latest UHS stories and updates, sign up for our e-newsletter at nyuhs.org.

UHS-058



UNITED HEALTH SERVICES
33-57 Harrison St.
Johnson City, NY 13790-2174

Non-Profit
Organization
US POSTAGE
PAID
UNITED HEALTH
SERVICES

think healthy / cancer services

did you know?

Take advantage of UHS cancer support services

Caring for cancer patients at UHS goes well beyond diagnosis and treatment. If you or someone you know is affected by cancer, you may not realize that many different support services are available—often free of charge or covered by insurance. *Some of the services UHS offers include:*

ONCOLOGY NURSE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

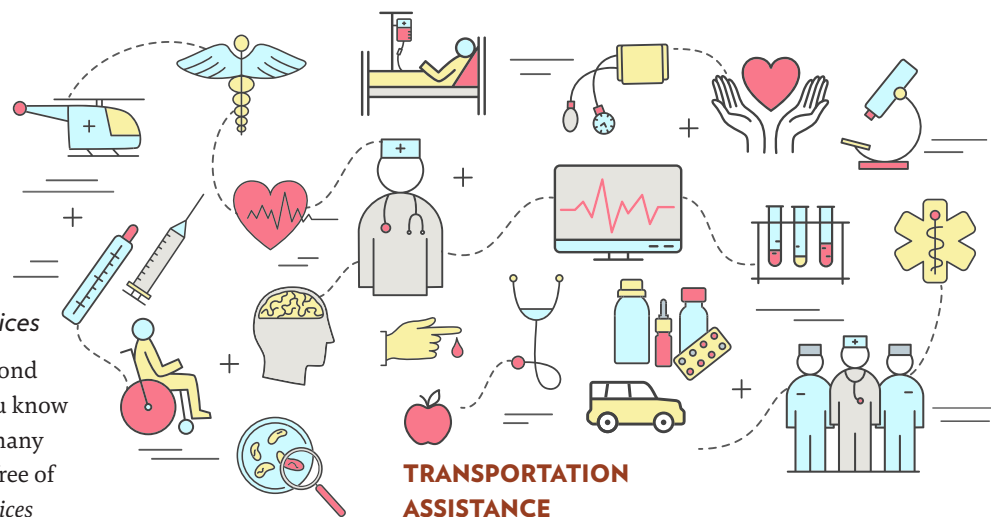
This program takes a holistic approach to cancer care and helps patients navigate many of the support services that UHS provides. From providing clinical support to nutritional services to support groups and meeting with social workers, the nurse navigators address all aspects of wellness.

ONCOLOGY NUTRITION

Rebecca Robins, RD, a clinical dietitian and certified specialist in oncology nutrition, works with cancer patients to develop individualized nutrition prescriptions. “It includes managing their side effects and providing evidence-based research during treatment and through survivorship,” says Ms. Robins about her work at UHS. “Nutrition is a huge component of patients’ success, and the fact that I’m here as a full-time employee, which is rare compared to most places, is amazing.”

HOPE PROGRAM

Helping Oncology Patients Exercise (HOPE) is a 12-week UHS program supervised by exercise physiologists and registered nurses that helps cancer patients engage meaningfully in fitness activities. Guided exercise can help a person fight fatigue and feel better.



FINANCIAL ADVOCACY

UHS offers on-site financial advocacy at all of our practices, which can help patients contact and work with insurance companies, as well as identify resources for patients who may not have insurance. In addition, UHS financial advocates can help patients find community resources, such as the Sock Out Cancer fundraiser that the UHS Foundation supports, to help pay for many of the expenses that arise during cancer treatment and survivorship.

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

Throughout the communities that UHS serves, many programs are available that help patients who are lacking transportation get to their appointments. UHS cancer support services can help patients find and apply for these programs to ensure they are able to access the care they need.



COMPLETE CARE

To learn more about UHS advocacy, support, assistance and other programs like these, call **763-6060**, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m., or visit nyuhs.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Emotional support from people who understand the stressors of being diagnosed with cancer can make the experience easier to manage. UHS offers support groups for newly diagnosed cancer patients, cancer survivors, caregivers and children with family members or other loved ones with cancer.



VISIT nyuhs.org,
or call **762-2178**.