Call it a clan,
call it a network,
call it a tribe,
call it a family.
Whatever you call it,
whoever you are,
you need one.

~Jane Howard
Embracing Life’s Challenges
By Hillary Adams

I am the mother of a child with special needs, the wife of a husband living with a chronic kidney disease, and a full time pediatric physical therapist. My life has always been a bit stressful to say the least, and that was before I was diagnosed with chronic leukemia.

My husband and I were married in 2004. He was born with a rare genetic kidney disorder called Alport Syndrome which affects the kidneys, ears and eyes. Men with Alport Syndrome often experience a slow decline in kidney function, typically leading to renal failure between the ages of 25 and 40. We’ve always known that we would someday reach this inevitable outcome when my husband would likely need dialysis treatments and a kidney transplant. By January of 2013, his kidney function had declined enough that he was put on the national organ donor list for a kidney transplant through Albany Medical Center.

When my daughter was born in 2009, my husband and I noticed a few light birthmarks on her skin. Within a year, the marks had multiplied and we started to become increasingly concerned about what they could mean. We soon found out through several visits to her pediatrician and related specialists that her markings, referred to as café au lait spots, were a manifestation of Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF1). NF1 is a disorder that can cause tumors, called neurofibromas, to grow along the nervous system, along with various sensory, motor and behavioral issues. The tumors, if they develop, can lead to blindness, scoliosis, and pain due to pressure from the neurofibromas themselves. Shortly after my daughter’s second birthday, we discovered that she had also inherited Alport Syndrome from my husband on top of her NF1. Due to her diagnoses, and the daily challenges that come along with them, my daughter sees various specialists from Albany to New York City to receive specialty care, along with physical therapy, occupational therapy and counseling.

With my daughter’s special needs and my husband’s declining health, I’ve always had to be the caretaker of our family. I manage our hectic calen-
ever, that night she called me at 9:00 pm and said, "Hillary, I think you may have a chronic form of leukemia. It’s very treatable, but we have to get you to a hematologist right away." As I put the phone down and told my husband the news, I thought, "No way. It’s just not possible." How could the universe burden one small family of three with so much hardship?

I met with a hematologist the very next day. She indicated that based on the left shift of my white blood cells, it was highly likely that I had chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). A bone marrow biopsy was the next step in confirming that I had the Philadelphia chromosome, an abnormality in chromosome 22 that’s used to diagnose CML. I was still hopeful that the biopsy would be negative and some other explanation would be found, but the pieces were coming together, and you can only deny the truth to yourself for so long. By the end of July, I was officially diagnosed with CML.

It took a while for it to sink in that I had cancer. Since there was no surgery to be scheduled or port to be placed, I was able to convince myself that it wasn’t real. I didn’t really have the time or energy to focus on my diagnosis. My family still needed me and my only option was to move forward, both with the recommended treatment and my life.

I started treatment immediately, in the form of a life saving targeted therapy drug called Gleevec. Gleevec is a daily pill that seeks out and destroys cancer cells in the blood, while leaving normal healthy cells to do their job. It also slows the replication of leukemia cells, often dramatically reducing their numbers within a relatively short period of time. At the time of my diagnosis in July, cancer cells made up 99% of my bone marrow. Now eight months later, that number is 1.6%. I will continue to take Gleevec or another form of this drug for the rest of my life.

The hematologist I had been seeing was a match made out of speed rather than convenience, and soon after starting treatment we both agreed that I needed to find a more permanent practice that would be closer to home. I already knew I wanted to receive my treatment at the C.R. Wood Cancer Center. Several years ago, a close friend of mine was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer. While she underwent chemotherapy treatments, I spent many hours with her and the experienced, caring nursing staff at the center. My friend also spoke highly of the center’s doctors. Even though our cancers were different, I knew I would feel comfortable there.

Upon setting up my first appointment at the cancer center, I decided to see what other services were available through Glens Falls Hospital. Through a Google search, I stumbled upon a blood cancer support group for individuals and family diagnosed with lymphoma, leukemia or multiple myeloma. I called Paul Miller, the group facilitator, at the end of August, not knowing if I was a “support group kind of girl.” Paul graciously welcomed me to the group and said he hoped I would come. I attended my first meeting in September and am very glad I did. The individuals who attend this group have come to mean so much to me. While enjoying coffee, sandwiches and cookies, we discuss our families, our medical woes, our triumphs and sometimes our fears. I came to accept my cancer and embrace my survivorship because of the people within this group.

Since my diagnosis and the start of my treatment, there have been some changes in my little family. Through the amazing teachers, aides and staff at my daughter’s school, she is excelling in kindergarten, and is starting to learn to manage her behaviors associated with NF1. My husband also received a kidney transplant in February of this year. After waiting two years on the national donor list, a living donor found us through Kidney Connection (kidneyconnection.org), an area website that helps connect those in need of kidney transplants with potential donors. He’s currently doing very well and feeling healthy again. As for me, the cancer levels in my blood continue to decline, giving me hope for the major molecular response that would declare my CML in remission. My doctors and specialists keep me under close watch, checking my cancer markers every three months and performing bone marrow biopsies as needed to measure my response to treatment. While Gleevec does cause some side effects, such as occasional dizziness, some nausea, extreme fatigue and frequent muscle pain, I feel lucky that it (Continued on next page)
We are Going to Win This!
By Cecelia Lanphear

Hello, my name is Cecelia Lanphear and I am a breast cancer survivor. In March of 2007, I was diagnosed with infiltrating ductal carcinoma, stage II, ER positive, Her2-neu negative breast cancer in my left breast.

I had found an open sore under my left arm. Never having had trouble with an open sore before, I immediately went to my doctor. She sent me for a test and called me a few days later to send me to a surgeon. I remember feeling fear, confusion and sadness. The surgeon removed my left breast and a lymph node.

I then met with Dr. Aqeel Gillani who I connected to and felt safe with. He is a kind and caring man who genuinely cares for his patients. He was a calming force as he patiently informed me of my options. I knew immediately that he would stay with me on my journey. I had faith in him.

I started chemotherapy with adriamycin and cytoxan every two weeks for four cycles and then I had taxol every two weeks for four cycles. I felt as if I was on a roller coaster and I wanted to get off.

I then went to radiation therapy for thirty three daily treatments. I finished that in November, 2007. This was followed by five years of arimidex which I finished in 2012. I should mention that I also had a simple mastectomy on the right side in July, 2009. I did this for balance and symmetry since it was difficult to find a bra that fit and also for my peace of mind.

In the summer of 2014, I noticed that I had a tough time walking up a hill. It hurt to breathe and I had to stop. Since I have always been active, this was an immediate red flag. I went to my primary care doctor who did a few tests and sent me to see Dr. Gillani. He sent me for a biopsy on my right chest area. It came back positive for metastatic breast cancer. In my case the cells broke away from the primary tumor and spread through the blood stream to the bone. I am back on the roller coaster and making a slow climb to the top.

Dr. Gillani asked if I wanted to take part in a clinical trial. The trial is looking at the CDK3 inhibitor. I take three pills in the morning for 21 days and I also take letrozal (to reduce estrogen). I get an xgeva injection (for bone health) once a month. I also take vitamin D and calcium citrate for my bones.

This treatment makes demands on my body. I’m tired, but I never give up. Before I leave my home I always make sure I have a smile on my face. I remind myself that there are a lot of other people who are struggling too and some of them have it harder than I do.

Embracing Life’s Challenges
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allows me to live my life with minimal medical intervention.

Though the road ahead is in no short supply of challenges, I try to maintain a positive outlook. Having cancer has taught me that life hands you the unexpected at every turn, and holding onto negativity is not worth the grief it causes you. I’ve also learned that I could never have made it through these challenges without the support of those who surround me. Through the strength I gain from my husband, my daughter, my family, my friends and the kind, knowledgeable professionals at the C.R. Wood Cancer Center, I’m slowly beginning to feel normal again. My life will always be stressful, but as the plaque hanging in my living room says, “It is what it is.” The future isn’t guaranteed for any of us. No matter what challenges may come my way, I’m going to embrace my life for what it is today.
Knowing how my body feels is important because my cancer wasn’t a lump. It was different each time. I was scared, but I put my cancer into the hands of the C.R. Wood Cancer Center and I have faith.

Beth is the clinical research nurse and she is kind, caring and always upbeat. I know it is important not to mask my feelings with her and we have developed an open rapport. When I feel sick or depressed I also have my wonderful family and friends. I feel so blessed to have them.

One day in school, one of my students said, “Mrs. Lanphear, why do you always wear those scarves?” I replied, “I really like them.” She responded quickly, “you look so pretty in them.” That is when I realized you can’t hide, you have to go on living. I realized that I would meet many people on this journey who will touch my heart, inspire me and help keep me strong.

Cancer is a small word that includes a big journey for those who are diagnosed with it. There is a saying that “cancer is not a sprint, but a marathon” that I think says it well. Be strong and positive even on days that are tough on your body and mind. Think of the good things: the sun shining, sitting on a porch, taking time to laugh at something funny.

I have gone to Cindy’s Retreat and I met some wonderful women who I will never forget. Thank you to Karen, Vickie and Lisa for all that you do. You are the best! We are going to win this battle!

Most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be.

Abraham Lincoln

With the Help of My Friends and Family
By Kristan Harvey

Hi, my name is Kristan and I have ovarian cancer. I was first diagnosed with ovarian cancer in September, 1986. I had been working a summer job and planning my first year at college. I was going to be starting at ACC for accounting. At the time I had been losing a lot of weight, but I was happy about that because I had been going to Weight Watchers. Even though I was losing weight my stomach was not getting any smaller; if anything, I looked like I was pregnant.

When I started college I would find myself fighting to stay awake. The last warning I got was when I was going out to eat with friends. I was not able to eat without feeling like I was going to be sick. So I finally went to the doctor.

My first stop was my primary care physician, Dr. Way. After I told him what had been going on and how I had been feeling, he thought I might be having gallbladder problems and sent me for an ultrasound. They had trouble doing it because I was retaining too much fluid. So they stopped it, made me drink lots of water and go back. Once this test was done we had to wait for the results. Dr. Way called and asked me what gynecologist I wanted to see because I had a tumor in my ovary.

That was when I started seeing Dr. Kate O’Keefe. She told me what the ultrasound had shown and she wanted to send me for a CT scan and another ultrasound. After the scans were done she told me that it could be cancer but that they really would not know until after the surgery. Everything happened very fast after that. I was in the hospital and ready for surgery about a week after my second visit with her. I remember that after the surgery I kept asking what they had to do. For some reason it just would not sink in that they had to do a hysterectomy as I had ovarian cancer. I really did not know what ovarian cancer was or how bad my case was. I just remember telling my mother that “it was not going to beat me, I was going to beat it.” As you can see, I am very stubborn.

That was when I started seeing Dr. Mark Hoffman. At my first meeting with him, he told me what type of chemotherapy I would be having and how often, which was once a month. I was very sick from one

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With the Help of My Friends and Family  
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Nothing that they gave me for nausea really worked or it caused an allergic reaction. It was seven months of hell and I lost my hair. I was 19 years old and that was the worst part of it for me. Not the fact that I was so sick, but that I had lost my hair. My hair did grow back as I was told it would. So the seven months were worth it because at the end of it, I was told I was cancer free! I remember crying when they gave me the news and calling my mom at work to let her know. Without her support it would have been so much harder to deal with.

Now we need to fast forward 27 years to May, 2013. I had been cancer free for so long I guess I was hoping that it would never come back. But I discovered a lump by my collar bone. I went to see my primary care physician who really did not think it was anything to worry about other than an enlarged lymph node. He sent me for an ultrasound and then a biopsy. I waited on pins and needles to find out what the results were. I kept calling the office to find out if they had heard anything yet. I was very scared but I did my best to keep that from everyone else. I will never forget the day I got the call from the doctor to tell me that the cancer had come back. I remember feeling like my whole world had just come to an end. I found that I could not stop crying. I called and told my mother, who drove down to Greenwich where I live to spend some time with me. My cousin Vicki also came. I remember thinking, “How can I go through those treatments again?”

So I found myself again going to see Dr. Hoffman. This time things were much different. He was now part of the Charles R. Wood Cancer Center and all treatments were done there. My first meeting with Dr. Hoffman was just to do blood work and to go over the results of the biopsy. He told me that it had come back with two tumor markers, one for ovarian cancer and one for thyroid cancer. He wanted me to have a CT scan and an ultrasound on my thyroid. He did tell me that my CA 125 (tumor marker) would not have raised any red flags because my numbers were not that high. After the tests were done, it was determined that my thyroid was okay but that I had a few lymph nodes that were involved. He said that we could watch and wait or start treatment. I told him that I did not want to wait and I wanted to start treatment. So in August we started treatment. I have to say that they have come a long way with all of the meds they have now. Even though I lost my hair and became very weak I was not sick like the last time. And the people who work at the Cancer Center are the best.

It has been almost two years since I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer again and I can say that with the help of my friends and family I have been able to fight this off once again. I am now taking Avastin every three weeks and I keep myself busy working. With the help of Avastin we have been able to keep my numbers low. I am still hoping for a full remission but that has not happened yet. I have been doing my best to eat all natural and no processed foods. I have also been trying to get in some exercise. I have learned not to worry about the small petty things and to live life to the fullest. I enjoy spending time with my family and my amazing friends. Without them and the wonderful people at the Cancer Center this fight would be so much harder.

"Happiness is like a butterfly. The more you chase it, the more it eludes you. But if you turn your attention to other things, It comes and sits softly on your shoulder."

Henry David Thoreau
I was diagnosed in September, 2000 with an intraductal carcinoma in my left breast. The suspicious areas were identified by a routine mammogram, then a biopsy. As a very healthy woman with no history of breast cancer, I was blindsided, devastated and fearful that it was a death sentence. To add to stress, I teach high school and I received the biopsy results at 3:00 PM the day before the first day of classes. Life suddenly revolved around surviving. My husband said to me, “We’ll do whatever needs to be done to get you through this”. His strength, support, questions and analysis have been a constant strength in achieving success. As they say, “First you cry” and so we did. Then together, we fought with a resolve to gather information, think it through, seek opinions and be successful.

After consulting with many physicians it was concluded I should have a mastectomy and I decided to also have reconstructive surgery. Fortunately, the cancer was localized so I did not have radiation or chemotherapy for my estrogen positive HER2/neu negative cancer. After a year of very basic oncology follow up visits, I met with Dr. Sponzo for a second opinion. I was happy to become his patient and was monitored more closely with routine blood work and regular breast MRIs and mammograms. I also took Tamoxifen for five years. I continued regular monitoring even after five years passed because it allowed me to “live” with my breast cancer.

In January, 2010, I found a suspicious lump under my arm. This required surgery, followed by chemotherapy and radiation. It was still in the same area and had the same pathology as the first one. I was given Faslodex (commonly referred to by me as “butt botox”) to keep the cancer at bay. In early May, 2014, following a surgery to remove what was certainly “scar tissue”, I was informed the breast cancer was back. This time, however, it changed pathology to HER2/neu positive which is a whole new set of circumstances. Again chemotherapy plus targeted antibody therapy was planned, but this time with the use of a port. For the foreseeable future, I’ll continue Herceptin and Perjecta infusions every 3 weeks. This is new targeted technology to interrupt the growth of the HER2/neu positive breast cancer cells.

My doctors, nurses and the entire staff of the C. R. Wood Cancer Center have been fabulous - they are my lifesavers! I love them all. For fifteen years they have treated me with respect, kindness and loving care. The boutique offers great support as well with beautiful wigs (which I opted not to wear), hats, scarves and hugs.

Along with my team at the Cancer Center, my family, friends, colleagues and students always provided support and caring. On May 28, 2010, the Hudson Falls Senior High School students sponsored a pink day for me. Locks of Love received donations as students and a teacher chopped their hair, 600 pink bandanas were sold and many wore pink! The Student Council made a substantial donation for cancer research to the Cancer Center as a result of their efforts. I continue to be grateful for all their amazing support and kindness during this time.

Fifteen years of fighting cancer has forever changed my life! I definitely appreciate every day more, even those ugly, freezing, snowy ones. I’ve been blessed to see my daughters attain their masters degrees, begin careers, marry and have children. I retired after forty wonderful years of teaching high school and we celebrated our fortieth wedding anniversary. I expect my future to be very long and very wonderful. I’m planning to enjoy my family and friends and continue to survive with regular visits to my support team at Glens Falls Hospital.

I’ll Continue to Survive
By Sarah Tatko
There Are Happy Endings. I Know
By Lynn Prindle

In every life there is an event that so changes us, we will never be the same again.

This happened in my life on February 12, 2010. My husband, Wayne, and I had been sick with what I thought must be the flu. After an appointment at our local health center, we knew otherwise. I had the flu, Wayne had stage IV lung cancer...the word that paralyzes.

The next seven months were a whirlwind of activity and long hours of waiting. Like being on a see-saw, our emotions were up, then down. The brave battle that Wayne waged with his cancer ended on September 30, 2010. I softly sang in his ear, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me”, as he slipped quietly into eternity. Our forty-one years together ended.

Adjusting to this new ‘singleness’ was, and continues to be, an awkward journey.

I returned to work which everyone said would be helpful. But going home to an empty house, especially in the winter, was difficult. Spring brought new life and lifted my spirits. I tended to my daily chores and scheduled my yearly checkups. Things were improving and my children were healing, too.

Then a message on my answering machine stated that I needed to call my doctor concerning my recent mammogram. Heart pounding, I spoke with Martha Fillion, who told me that “overlapping tissue” showed up and I needed to repeat the mammogram but don’t worry. I repeated the mammogram, had an ultrasound and biopsy. Cancer had reared its ugly head again. To make matters worse, my insurance was about to be terminated.

I knew that God would get me through, somehow. So many wonderful family members and friends were praying for me. My daughter, Kim, read a small notice in the Post Star about free insurance through Cancer Services Program (CSP) at Glens Falls Hospital. A phone number was included in the notice. Half doubting, I called. “Yes”, they said, and asked me to make an appointment. We went and I left with health coverage. It was such a burden lifted. The friendly folks at CSP have answered so many questions and have been so supportive that it’s still amazing to me.

Recently, I celebrated four years of being a cancer survivor and my sixty-fifth birthday. Medicare and a supplemental insurance are my coverage now.

I will never be able to thank my dear family, friends and CSP enough for being there when I needed them. May God bless all who battle this disease. There are happy endings. I know.

Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky.

Rabindranath Tagore
Think of Me When You Do
By Kim Hoteling

My name is Kim Hotaling and I was 39 when I was diagnosed with stage 3c/4a ovarian cancer. Hearing those words for the first time was devastating. The first thing I thought of was my kids and if they did not have a mom. Who was going to take care of them? Who would make sure they graduate and get through college? Who would help them with life’s struggles like my mom still does for me? My next thought was wait, I can beat this. This is not going to kill me that easily. Let’s fight. Let’s teach. Let’s get the word out.

I went to all of my “woman” appointments every year like I was supposed to. I had fibroid cysts on my fallopian tubes in my mid-20’s. When I started to have symptoms such as painful intercourse, I went to the doctor and had internal and external ultrasounds. Nobody ever said to me that my ovaries were enlarged, but they were. I had all the usual symptoms for ovarian cancer but I didn’t advocate enough for myself or listen to my body. I had really heavy menstrual cycles and painful intercourse. About a year later when I got really bloated, I finally went to my regular doctor. This was in November, 2012. It was thought to be a bowel blockage so I had an x-ray, but it wasn’t that. I took laxatives and it didn’t get any better. I went back and they did an MRI a few days later. I received a call that there was fluid in my abdomen. Then they sent me to have another internal and external ultrasound. Again they said that was fine. I went to a gastroenterologist but they could not take the fluid for another three days. By this time I was in a lot of pain due to bloating. I felt I could not wait another three days so they advised me to go see my OBGYN. Again I could not get in right away and by this time I was extremely frustrated. That night, on the advice from a wise man, I took myself to the emergency room and they admitted me.

The very next day I had six liters of fluid drained and biopsied. The following Monday I was told that it was a female cancer and that I needed to see a specialist. By Wednesday that week I was told to see Dr. Timmons at Women’s Cancer Care Center. I saw him the following week and he explained that I had ovarian cancer and I had 3 to 7 years to live. The next week I had a hysterectomy which was on December 12, 2012.

I had genetic testing done due to family history on my father’s side. My grandmother and my aunt both passed away from breast cancer. It turns out that I am BRCA positive and also carry a mutated gene which gives me an increased chance for breast cancer. It also gives my sons a 50% chance for testicular cancer so they need to be checked yearly starting at puberty. My sister and my niece were also checked and both turned out positive. My sister had a preventative hysterectomy and my niece is being watched very closely.

Since my hysterectomy, I have had numerous chemotherapies that have not held it in check for long periods of time. I have also been very sick, but through it all I try to remain positive. I try to live with my cancer because it is not going anywhere. I try to advocate for people by speaking freely about my cancer and my symptoms because they were very much like a lot of other things that are not cancer. This is why ovarian cancer has been called the silent killer.

I am on my third year with this disease and I am taking Olaparib which is a PARP inhibitor and my last hope of living to see my kids graduate. I am doing well so far and my masses have shrunk just a smidge, but hey, we would all take the smidge, right?

(Editor’s Note: Olaparib is a type of biological therapy called a PARP-1 inhibitor. This means it blocks a protein called PARP-1. PARP is short for Poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase. This is an enzyme which helps to repair DNA which is damaged. Cancer cells have damaged DNA and rely on PARP to repair it. So when olaparib stops PARP from repairing DNA damage, the cancer cells die.)

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Support Services and Programs

For general questions about cancer or support services available, please call Oncology Resource Nurses:
Vickie at 926-6639 or Paul at 926-6629.

Services for Individuals by Appointment

Care Management
For: Continuing care needs, transportation and financial concerns
Info: Karen Cook, LMSW, OSW-C ~ 926-6619

Chemotherapy Education Class
For: Individuals & family starting chemotherapy
Meets: Tuesdays at 4:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library or by appointment at your convenience
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN® ~ 926-6639
Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

Clinical Research
For: Anyone interested in learning about clinical trials
Info: Beth Brundage, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6644

Genetics Counseling
For: Anyone concerned about their personal or family history of cancer
Info: ~ 926-6620

Nutrition Counseling
For: Anyone interested in dietary counseling
Info: Andrea Chowske, RD, CD-N ~ 926-2635

Pastoral Care
For: Anyone interested in spiritual counseling
Info: Please call 926-3531

Patient Financial/Insurance Assistance
For: Referrals, prior authorizations, billing, insurance questions
Info: Michele Walker ~ 926-6637

Psychosocial Oncology
For: Counseling for patients and/or their families
Info: Gerry Florio, Ph.D. ~ 926-6529
Call 926-6640 for an appointment
Karen Cook, LMSW, OSW-C ~ 926-6619

Resource Nurses
For: Individuals & family diagnosed with any cancer
Meets: By appointment or stop by
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN® ~ 926-6639
Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

Spa Services at Cindy’s Healing Place
(Massage Therapy)
For: Cancer patients during and after treatment
Meets: By appointment at Cindy’s Healing Place
Info: Please call 926-6640

Uniquely You® Boutique & Salon
For: Any cancer patient
Free wigs, hats & turbans, skin & hair care
Meets: By appointment on Tuesdays in the C. R. Wood Cancer Center
Info: Please call 926-6640

Special Programs (Pre-Registration Required)

CG Men’s Retreat
For: Men living with and beyond cancer
Meets: One weekend each year in the Fall
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

Cindy’s Retreat
For: Women living with and beyond cancer
Meets: One weekend each Spring and Fall at Silver Bay on Lake George
Info: Karen Cook, LMSW ~ 926-6619
www.cindysretreat.org

Cindy’s Comfort Camp
For: Children and teens ages 6-17 years who have experienced the death or serious illness of a parent or close relative
Meets: One weekend each Spring and Fall at the Double "H" Hole in the Woods Ranch in Lake Luzerne
Info: 926-6515 or www.cindysretreat.org

Tobacco Cessation
Whether you’re thinking about quitting or ready to quit, call the NYS Smokers’ Quitline for help and support.
1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487)
Support Groups and Events

These groups are open-ended and you may come as you wish. You may want to call if you are new or you have not come for some time to make sure that the schedule or location has not changed.

Discussion Groups

ABC Support Group
(After Breast Cancer)
For: Individuals with breast cancer
Meets: 4th Monday each month
6:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Waiting Room
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN® ~ 926-6639

Blood Cancer Support Group
(Leukemia & Lymphoma Society)
For: Individuals & family diagnosed with lymphoma, leukemia or multiple myeloma
Meets: 2nd Wednesday each month
6:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

Family Connections
For: Families (parents, children or teens) facing life after the loss of a loved one
Meets: 2nd Thursday each month (3rd Thursday in April) in Glens Falls or Saratoga (alternating)
Info: Gerry Florio ~ 926-6528
familyconnections@nycap.rr.com
Please let us know if you are coming so we can have enough supplies available and food for the family style meal that is included.

Prostate Cancer Awareness Group
For: Men with prostate cancer and their families
Meets: 3rd Thursday each month
7:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

Rays of Hope
For: Women with ovarian cancer
Meets: 3rd Wednesday each month
4:00 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library
Info: Mary Davis ~ 656-9321
Carol Smith ~ 793-0565

Activity Groups

Circle of Hope Knitting Group
For: Cancer Survivors who want to learn to knit and crochet. Teachers available
Meets: Wednesdays ~ 1:30 P.M. ~ Cancer Center Library
Info: Vickie Yattaw, RN, BSN, OCN® ~ 926-6639

Healthy Steps®
For: Gentle exercise for individuals with a cancer diagnosis
Meets: Tuesdays at 10:00 am – Community Learning Center (Side B)
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

Tai Chi and Relaxation/Meditation
For: Anyone interested
Meets: Monday afternoon at 3:30 P.M. and 5:30 P.M Community Learning Center (Side B)
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

Twisted Twirlers
For: Individuals diagnosed with any cancer who would like to join this Hall of Fame twirling group
Meets: 11:30 A.M. ~ 1st and 3rd Tuesday each month
Community Learning Center (Side B)
Info: Carol Newton ~ 854-9860

Ways of Seeing - Art Workshop
For: Individuals & family diagnosed with any cancer who want to enjoy the life affirming pleasures of creating art
Meets: 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month at 11:30 A.M. in the Cancer Center Library
Info: Paul Miller, RN, OCN® ~ 926-6629

Annual Survivors Events
(Pre-Registration Required)

Breast Cancer Survivor Luncheon
October, please call Vickie at 926-6639 for information

Spring Survivorship Celebration Breakfast
Spring, please call Paul at 926-6629 for information

Quit for Life
Stop Smoking Program
(Pre-Registration Required)

A 4 week program for anyone who would like to quit smoking
July 21, 28 & August 4, 11
Tuesday nights at 6:00 PM—7:00 PM
In the CR Wood Cancer Center Library
For information or to register please call Paul at 926-6629
I am Theresa Marie Welch and this is my story about my breast cancer. I was a 39 year old mother of three teenagers, a girlfriend to a wonderful man for 6 years and I was working at a full time job when I was diagnosed. I had my regular breast exam with my gynecologist, Dr. Mary Ann Carter, in October, 2013. She said all was good with my breast exam. She did want to get a mammogram done for a baseline, however. I later found a lump on my left breast around February, 2014. I made an appointment to get a mammography test done at the Warrensburg Health Center. Since I found a lump they were not able to do a regular screening mammogram and I had to have other tests done as well. They couldn’t do these tests that day because they needed different paperwork from my gynecologist. To speed things along, my gynecologist got me into Women’s Imaging Center in Plattsburgh in March, 2014. I had the mammogram, ultrasound and then had to have a stereotactic breast biopsy done. This was the most painful thing I had ever experienced. I then went home to wait for the results which came back that I had breast cancer. I remember talking to the doctor and my mind just going blank. I remember the letters IDC (Invasive Ductal Carcinoma) like I heard them yesterday. The cancer was stage II. I remember being angry, scared, sad, confused, wondering why and thinking about my kids.

I found out that I had breast cancer the day before my daughter turned 15. What is going to happen to my kids? Is this cancer caught early enough? I remember thinking, am I going to die? I had so many things going through my mind. I was lucky that when I got the call, my boyfriend was home for lunch. When I told him what the doctor said, he called his job and took off work for the rest of the day to be home with me. We talked about what we wanted to do. I did some research into the type of breast cancer I had. I looked up a lot of meanings to new words to help prepare myself for what was going to happen next. I then had to tell my kids when they came home from school. I was not sure how to tell them or where to start. There were lots of tears, questions and worry. My daughter Samantha Dawn Rae celebrated her 15th birthday the next day.

My gynecologist made an appointment at the Breast Care Center in Burlington, Vermont. After several appointments in Burlington, I asked if all my treatments could be done at Glens Falls Hospital or in the area since it was closer for me. I was then set up for an appointment with Dr. Eric Pillemer at the C.R. Wood Cancer Center in early April. We then went over all my treatment options again and we made a plan to be as aggressive as we could with treatment. I then had to get a port placed. This was done right at Glens Falls Hospital. My first round of chemotherapy was set for April 16th at the C.R. Wood Cancer Center with Dr. Eric Pillemer. I was to do 4 cycles of Taxotere, Perjeta, and Herceptin. This would be every 3 weeks along with blood work (labs) and a nadir visit every week to follow my blood counts. I had a Neulasta injection the day after every round of chemotherapy. My body handled the chemotherapy very well. I wasn’t as sick as I thought I would be. The metal taste in my mouth wasn’t the greatest. But I learned to eat or drink things that didn’t give me that taste. Chewing sugar free gum helped a lot.

I started a scrapbook to keep track of my journey. I call it my Journey Book. I put things in it starting from my first hospital bracelet to when my daughter cut my ponytail off. I joined an online program called Chemo Angels. This is a wonderful organization that has truly helped me in this battle. I have two awesome Chemo Angels who send me letters, cards, photos, cookies and so much love and support. They are truly amazing women. This program helped me through some not so nice days. I also joined two groups on Facebook for breast cancer survivors, warriors, champions, fighters, etc… One was called Breast Cancer Survivors and the other, Breast Cancer Champions.

The hardest thing I have ever had to handle was on May 9th. This was the day I had to say good
bye to the greatest man I knew. This was the day that we lost my dad. We lost him two days before my oldest son, Austin Reed, turned 19 years old. The rest of my journey would have to be done without my dad. This was the worst day in my life. I didn’t think it would be as hard since I was already dealing with the worst news I thought I could ever hear. I was wrong. I had to be stronger than before. I know deep down that my dad is watching over me. He is my guardian angel. He has helped me through all my treatments and surgery. He has been right beside me through my battle. I know I had great blood counts after my first two cycles of chemotherapy. I know my dad was helping me with my fight.

I had a follow up appointment with Dr. Seth Harlow at the Breast Care Center in Burlington, Vermont. This was for an ultrasound to see if the chemotherapy was working. The tumor was in fact shrinking so the chemotherapy was doing its job. My blood counts had been really great so Dr. Pillemer thought it was okay not to have my Neulasta injection. When I went in the next time we found out that my blood counts were too low and the following week my blood count was still very low. I was put on an antibiotic just as a precaution. My fourth and last cycle was June 18th and I did get my Neulasta injection the day after and my blood counts remained good.

I went in July 30th for my mastectomy and was home the next day. The surgery went well and the pain wasn’t as bad as I was expecting. I took the pain medication they gave me for a day or two then went to extra strength Tylenol. I had my post-op appointment and was also seen at the rehabilitation center where I was told to slowly get back into my normal routine. I was shown how to massage my arm to prevent lymphedema in my arm.

My next appointment with Dr. Pillemer was set to start my last three rounds of (FEC) chemotherapy. The FEC stands for Fluorouracil (Adrucil), Epirubicin (Ellence), and Cytoxan (Cyclophosphamide). I also had thirty rounds of radiation with Dr. Benjamin Frasier at the C.R. Wood Cancer Center. I was feeling good so my children, my boyfriend and I went to a concert in Albany. This was the first time in a long time that we were able to get out and do something as a family.

I tell everyone that I have the most amazing support team ever. I have so much love and support from my children, my boyfriend, family, friends, my Chemo Angels, my boyfriend’s boss (Mr. Rudd) and all those who work with him. They have all been the greatest support team anyone could hope for.

September was just getting back to normal for our family when my children then lost their other grandfather. My ex-husband’s father passed away eight days before my other son, Branden Lee, celebrated his 17th birthday. So we had to try to get back to normal once again.

My last chemotherapy was October 9, 2014. On October 31st I got my tattoo for my radiation treatments. I started that on November 3rd. These treatments were every day, Monday through Friday. I started Herceptin back up in November to finish off a year of treatment. I will do this every three weeks along with blood work and visits with Dr. Pillemer. My last round of radiation was to be December 19th, but Dr. Frasier decided December 16th would be the last treatment. This was more great news for me. I enjoy all the good news that I can get. I am sure all cancer patients do.

I believed 2015 had to be a better year for my family and me. On my mom’s birthday, January 13, I went to see my gynecologist (Dr. Mary Ann Carter). We had to figure out if I should have a hysterectomy because my cancer was hormone positive. After several doctor visits and tests it was decided that I didn’t need one at this time.

February had to be a great month since I was here to celebrate my 40th birthday. I was able to make an appointment to see a plastic surgeon. Dr. Craig Roberts in Saratoga Springs said that I was better off to wait a full year after my last radiation treatment before doing any reconstruction.

I now get a Lupron injection every 3 months. This is to stop my ovaries from working. I will be taking Aromasin once a day for 5 years. I will start this as soon as I have fully stopped my menstrual cycle. I was told at my last visit with Dr. Pillemer that my last Herceptin treatment is June 26th.

(Continued on next page)
We Were Close to Begin With
Continued from page 13)

This has been a long and very tough road. I believe cancer has changed me and made me realize just how short life really is. Love your family and friends. Tell your loved ones everyday that you love them. Smile and don’t take one day for granted. Live life to the fullest. I have had a lot of positive people in my life to help me through this battle. I made new friends on a facebook group as well. I believe having people to talk to that are going through the same battle makes things easier. Staying positive even when you don’t want to be and having a great support team like I do helps you through the rough times.

I have an amazing medical team as well. I know I would not be here today without Dr. Mary Ann Carter, Dr. Seth Harlow, Dr. Pillemer and Dr. Fra-sier. The nursing staff at all the offices I have been to are truly amazing. They care for their patients with love and respect. I am glad that I had them helping me through my journey. My future plans include a vacation that is well deserved, getting back to work (hopefully) and spending every minute I can with my kids, boyfriend and loved ones. I take a deep breath and thank God he is taking care of me. I spend every day being thankful and glad to be alive.

I would like to also thank my children, Austin Reed Ruger, Branden Lee Ruger, Samantha Dawn Rae Ruger, my loving and caring boyfriend, Brian Michael Freebern and my two fur babies, Beavis Michael and Mortimore Brian. They helped me through the toughest time in my life. A special thank you to our family, friends and those of you who helped us as much as you could. Also, thanks to the wonderful organizations that helped us financially through our battle. This journey has brought my children closer to each other as well as to me. We were close to begin with but this just tightened the knot, I guess you could say.

Think of Me When You Do
(Continued form page 9)

The C.R. Wood Cancer Center has been a godsend to me. The nurses and my oncologist, Dr. John Stoutenburg, help me at the drop of a hat. I have been to Cindy’s Retreat and my son has been to Cindy’s Comfort Camp. I have seen everyone from the psychologist to the kind and supportive nurses and social worker that comprise their network. You need to almost grieve before your time when you have cancer. I have gone through all the emotions and Karen and Vickie have found their way into my heart and my emergency contact list! They are two of the people that you need to find if you ever hear the words, “You have cancer”.

I have given of myself and my time to try and help others with their own personal battle. I belong to several online support groups. I am open to trying new things and meeting new people anytime because everyone has a purpose and helping other people is mine. My very supportive family members are here for me to just cry with, or to make me laugh, and I depend on my mom for rides and many other things. We all try to remain positive. I have a very loving family. My husband, who is a rock, will not let me wallow in self-pity for too long. I have two sons, one who goes to college in Rochester and my little one who lives at home with us. My children bring me great joy; one is my light and the other is my strength and help. They are all here for me to share humor or sadness, depending on my need. I have my good physical days and I have my not so good days. In each day I try to find something to smile about. I share my story because I feel it could save someone’s life.

My goal is to keep this “silent killer” from causing anyone else the pain it has caused me and my family. I want to remain a guiding light even after my light is gone. I would like to be remembered by my positivity and grace through this whole ugly process. My friends and family are the best anyone could ask for and in my memory I hope the fight continues. So keep an open line of communication where this cancer is concerned, talk about it with your loved ones—and think of me when you do!
When Breast Cancer Surgery Knocks, Answer with a "Knocker"!

A group of Granville area women did just that with their knitting needles and yarn by turning their attention to Breast Cancer Awareness in October. During their weekly gathering they knit "Knockers" in hopes of bringing a smile and touch of comfort to those impacted by breast surgeries and breast cancer challenges.

The Tuesday Night Knitting Group of Granville joined the wave of knitters who create knitted breast prostheses that are comfortable, colorful and cost nothing to receive. Over a decade ago, the enthusiasm to knit "Knockers" was broadcast on CNN and since then has taken on a life of its own.

After breast surgery, the struggle to feel at ease when leaving the privacy of one's home can be an added heartache. When delays in prosthesis fittings, lack of insurance to pay extreme costs, and the discomfort of some prostheses bombard a person's life following breast surgery, the discouragement can be yet another mountain to overcome. In many places around the globe knitters are crafting "Knockers" to minimize those challenges.

Locally, the Granville area women donated their "Knockers" to the Uniquely You Boutique and Salon and the Breast Center. Vicki Yattaw, resource nurse at the Cancer Center, was excited to receive the overflowing basket of cheerful "Knockers" that the knitting group delivered.

For more information about the services available through the Breast Center and the Uniquely You Boutique and Salon, contact Vickie Yattaw, RN, ONC at (518) 926-6639.

Patterns and helpful tips for knitting or crocheting "Knockers" are available online and at some area yarn shops, such as www.knittedknockers.org and at the Village Yarn Shop, 4 East Main Street, Granville, New York.

National Cancer Survivors Day Celebration

The C. R. Wood Cancer Center celebrated National Cancer Survivors Day (NCSD) during the first week in June. Typically, NCSD is celebrated throughout the United States on the first Sunday in June each year. We kicked off our week-long celebration at the Gideon Putnam Resort on May 30th with the 6th Annual Survivors Celebration Breakfast that had over 200 cancer survivors and their guests in attendance. The C. R. Wood Cancer Center’s Nikole Delair, RPA-C, discussed managing late and long term treatment side effects. A group of a dozen breast cancer survivors known as “The Boobie Sisters” performed by singing altered lyrics to well-known tunes.

During the week, patients were treated to snacks in the waiting room and a different gift basket giveaway each day. Cancer Center staff enjoyed choosing themes and purchasing goodies for our patients’ baskets.
**Your Cancer Care Team**

**Jerry Hohler, Patient Care Tech. II—Inpatient Oncology**

Jerry is working days on Tower 2. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Jacksonville University in Florida. He was a case manager for Rensselaer County before embarking on a career in nursing. Jerry also served in the U.S. Navy for two years. He is currently enrolled in the nursing program at SUNY Adirondack.

Jerry enjoys travelling, BMX bicycling and spending time with his family. He also enjoys time with his two dogs and four cats.

**Michelle Lemon, Patient Care Tech.—Inpatient Oncology**

Michelle joined GFH over three years ago and has worked in the Renal Dialysis Center until recently moving to Tower 2. She received her Nurse’s Aide certification in 2001 prior to graduating high school. She has a massage therapy certification that she earned in 2009 and has been an EMT since 2011. She is currently attending SUNY Adirondack for her Medical Technology degree.

Michelle loves snow and snowshoeing. She enjoys sewing and crafting in her spare time.

**Caty Nelson, Nurse’s Aide—Inpatient Oncology**

Caty has been working as a Nurse’s Aide on Tower 2 since April. She had been working at an adult home for three years prior to oncology. She has been certified as a Nurse’s Aide since 2011.

Caty is married to Tyson and has three children, Melinda (9), Maddison (5) and Rayden (3).

**Christy Olden, RN—Inpatient Oncology**

Christy recently completed her Associate’s degree in Nursing from SUNY Adirondack and continues to work on Tower 2 in her new role as a registered nurse. She had been a Patient Care Tech. II on Tower 2 for the past year. Her father was a patient here and Christy was inspired to serve on Tower 2 after she saw the great care that her father received.

Christy is engaged to E. J. and has two Great Danes, Khane and Kiyah. She enjoys kayaking and four wheeling.

**Kim Sweener** is now a graduate nurse working on Tower 2. She was featured last year (Summer 2014 issue) as a new Patient Care Tech. II. Congratulations, Kim!
Announcements

Survey Says... What You Want to Say to Us

You may receive a survey from Press Ganey on behalf of the C.R. Wood Cancer Center in the near future. We encourage you to complete it as it is a great way for you to let us know how we are doing. Your feedback is important to us and can help us improve upon the services that are important to you.

The survey asks questions about your visit and how your experience was. You will be asked to fill in a few dots to express this and if you wish, there is room to comment. For example one section asks questions about our facility: Is it clean? Is it comfortable? You would simply fill in the circle that expresses your opinion ranging from very poor to very good.

It should take only a few minutes to complete and includes a reply envelope that is ready to go out in the mail. If you have shared your e-mail address with us you will receive the survey via e-mail and can then send it back to us via e-mail.

We strongly encourage you to reply with your honest opinion about the services that you received here. If you are seeing us on a regular basis (daily or weekly, for example) you may receive a survey as often as every 3 months. You may also receive a separate survey after an inpatient stay or a visit to the emergency department. We appreciate your help with this important assessment of our services.

Cancer Survivors’ Summer Picnic

With the SunDancers belly dance group
Wednesday, August 5, 2015 - 5:00 to 7:30 PM
Crandall Park Pavilion, Glens Falls

Cancer survivors and their guests are invited to attend. No reservations are necessary. Come for an hour or stay for the evening. Please bring a covered dish to share, a beverage for yourself and (if you like) a lawn chair (the pavilion has picnic tables).

Barbeque food and bottled water will be provided.

Crandall Park is located next to the YMCA on Glen Street. Enter Crandall Park next to the pond and follow the road around toward the back. The pavilion is near the playground (you can’t miss us).

For more information, please call: Paul at 926-6629 or Vickie at 926-6639

Sharon Ragaini, Registered Health Information Technician—Cancer Registry

Sharon is working with our cancer registry team. Cancer registrars manage cancer patient databases, recording information that may be used to help detect cancer earlier, improve treatments and increase survival rates. Sharon has an Associate’s degree in Science from Mohawk Valley Community College. She is currently working on her web-based Oncology Information Management degree while completing her practicum here.

Sharon is married to Ian, with two children, Kyle (10) and Ryan (12). They are avid hikers.
New Minimally Invasive Lung Biopsy Option at Glens Falls Hospital
By Vickie Yattaw, RN, OCN

When you have a spot or nodule on your lung, it’s important to learn as much as possible about it. Fortunately, there is now a minimally invasive option for finding out what your nodule is and what, if anything, needs to be done about it.

Electromagnetic Navigation Bronchoscopy™ procedure, also known as ENB™ procedure, provides a minimally invasive approach to accessing difficult to reach areas of the lung, aiding in the diagnosis and management of lung disease.

What is a lung nodule? A lung nodule is a spot in the lungs that can be seen with a chest x-ray or CT scan. It is usually discovered not by symptoms a patient is experiencing, but during the course of conducting another test. More than half of all lung nodules are not cancerous (benign). Lung nodules have many causes, including old scars and infections, exposure to certain chemicals and smoking. The only way to find out what type of nodule you have, and if any sort of treatment is necessary, is to take a tissue sample or biopsy, and examine it under a microscope.

How does an ENB™ procedure work? Using a CAT scan, the navigation system with LungGPS™ technology creates a roadmap of your lungs, like a GPS does in a car. That roadmap guides the physician through the airways of your lungs to the nodule so that he or she is able to obtain tissue to diagnose, stage and prepare to treat all in one procedure.

How does ENB™ procedure differ from other biopsy procedures? In a traditional bronchoscopy procedure a thin lighted tube (bronchoscope) is passed down the throat to take samples, but can only reach the central area of the lungs. With the ENB™ procedure, your physician is able to navigate to nodules even in the most distant areas of the lung in a minimally invasive approach. Other biopsy options include more invasive techniques like a needle biopsy or surgery, but these carry a higher risk of complication.

Who is a candidate for an ENB™ procedure? An ENB™ procedure can be used with a broad range of patients, including those who suffer from poor lung function or have an increased risk of complications with invasive procedures,

What are the risks of more invasive procedures versus an ENB™ procedure? More invasive procedures come with a greater risk of complications. Pneumothorax (collapsed lung) is the most common risk. Rates can be as high as 40% for procedures such as needle biopsies. Pneumothorax occurs in less than 3% of the ENB™ procedure patients because it is a minimally invasive procedure that uses your natural airways.

What can I expect during this procedure? During the ENB™ procedure, you will be sedated and your physician will insert a bronchoscope through your mouth or nose and into your lungs. Once the tube is in place, your physician will insert specially designed tools to take a biopsy for testing. In some cases small markers, about the size of a grain of rice, may be placed near the lung nodule to help guide a physician delivering follow-up treatment or therapy.

Where does the procedure take place? How long does it take? What can be expected after the procedure? The procedure takes place in an operating room in the hospital and usually takes one hour. Most patients are able to go home the same day and resume normal activities. The most common effects are coughing and many patients cough up a small amount of blood.

For more information about managing your lung health, visit www.spotonyourlung.com.
Clinical Research at the C.R. Wood Cancer Center at Glens Falls Hospital

If you have been diagnosed with cancer, you may want to talk to your physician about taking part in a clinical trial. Clinical trials may offer treatment options for patients with cancer that are not otherwise available.

- **If you have just found out that you have cancer**, the time to think about a clinical trial is before you make a treatment decision. Talk with your doctor about all your options, including a clinical trial.

Other clinical trials are looking for people who have already been treated for their cancer.

- **If you have already had one or more forms of cancer treatment** and are looking for a new treatment option, there may still be a clinical trial for you to think about.

Please call our research office at 518.926.6644 or 926.6701 for more information about clinical trials available at Glens Falls Hospital or visit our website at www.glensfallshospital.org/CRWood-Cancer-Center/clinical-research/clinical-research.cfm.

You may also want to visit the National Cancer Institute website for other clinical trials at www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials.

Cancer Services Program (CSP)

Men and women who are uninsured, meet eligibility criteria and are in need of treatment for breast, cervical, colorectal or prostate cancer, may be eligible for full Medicaid coverage through the Medicaid Cancer Treatment Program. Coverage is arranged through the Cancer Services Program Case Manager and will last for the entire treatment period.

These eligibility guidelines are more generous than local counties’ departments of social services. So if you’ve been denied in the past, please don’t let that stop you from applying again through the Cancer Services Program.

Glens Falls Hospital provides a New York State Department of Health Cancer Services Program grant that funds breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings and follow-up testing at no cost for uninsured women and men. If you or someone you love is without health insurance, call today at: 1.800.882.0121 or 518.926.6570.

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When You Need to Call Us

**Medical Oncology**

When you call during clinic hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm weekdays) you will reach the telephone triage nurse. Her phone number is 926-6620, the number you are given to call if you have any questions or problems.

When you call you will very likely need to leave a message as she is often busy with other patients who have also called. Please try to speak clearly (without rushing) with the following information in the message to help her assist you efficiently:

- Your name, or the name of the person you are calling about (please spell the last name)
- Date of birth
- Your doctor’s name (not the PA because they work with multiple doctors)
- Your phone number (or where she can best get back to you)
- The reason why you are calling

If you are calling for a medication refill, please also include:

- The name of the pharmacy you use
- The medication and the dose

You will need to allow 48 hours to have the medications refilled. Most prescriptions will be sent to your pharmacy by e-mail (e-scribed). If it is a medication that cannot be sent electronically, we will call you back with instructions to pick up the script.

If you are having a medical problem, we will try to call you back within 2 hours. Please be patient as sometimes many calls come in within a short period of time.

MyChart (the online site) allows 48 hours for a response. If you are having a medical problem that needs prompt attention, it is better to call us and leave a message. MyChart is designed to provide a brief summary of your most recent visit with your doctor. Unfortunately, it is not an efficient forum for a detailed discussion with your care team. It is better to call with questions or, if appropriate, wait to discuss them at your next visit.

Many doctors return their calls (especially test and lab results) at the end of their clinic or at lunch time, so it may be a few hours before they get back to you. You can let us know if it is okay for them to leave a message with the results on your answering machine when you call.

If you call after hours and need a response, (evenings, nights, or weekends) please tell the answering service to page the on-call doctor. No one is available to check messages during off hours so it will not be received until the next business day.

**Radiation Oncology**

Patients receiving radiation therapy who have questions during clinic hours (8:00 am – 4:00 pm weekdays) should call the Radiation Therapy Department at 926-6670 and ask to speak to a nurse. You will be directed to Kelle Engel RN, BSN, OCN or Kit Howard, RN, OCN. If they are not available to speak with you, please leave a brief message with a call back number. You should expect a call back within 20 to 30 minutes.

If it is an emergency, please call 911. If you have questions or concerns after the department closes or on the weekend, please call the same number, 926-6670. An answering service will take your information along with a phone number and a radiation oncologist will return your call. Please do not wait with a problem. The radiation oncologists are on call to address any of your concerns.