



Navigating Patient Care: Supportive Care and Survivorship

The Supportive Care and Survivorship Program at The University of Arizona Cancer Center at Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center (Cancer Center) provides care to enhance one's quality of life throughout all stages of treatment and recovery. The supportive care team provides expert pain and symptom management and maximizes each patient's function by providing treatments for their symptoms. The types of therapies used are based on each patient's individual needs as they go through their cancer journey.

A PROGRAM AS UNIQUE AS ITS PATIENTS

We recognize that a cancer "survivor" is anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer, is living with cancer, or does not have

evidence of disease. Through an approach that looks at all facets of care, the Supportive Care and Survivorship Program provides a caring environment that addresses each patient's changing needs and supports patients throughout their cancer treatment and beyond. In addition, the program provides cancer rehabilitation, cardiovascular assessment, and pain management.

Just as importantly, if a patient chooses to stop or delay treatment, the Supportive Care and Survivorship Program will continue to support them. In short, the supportive care continues as long as each patient desires it.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

Many patients recover fully from their disease and treatment, but others experience early, long-term, or late consequences that can impact the quality and duration of their lives. Fatigue, appetite and weight issues, anxiety, depression, and sexuality are the concerns most often reported. Cardiac and respiratory symptoms, hormonal changes, lymphedema, skin changes, nutritional problems, and a variety of other symptoms are also reported during treatment.

The Supportive Care and Survivorship Program educates and guides patients throughout their treatment, recovery, and beyond. The team first performs a comprehensive assessment of each patient and then creates a personalized plan based on each patient's individual symptoms and needs.

Physical, occupational, speech/swallow, and lymphedema therapies are available to each patient. Additional services include: onsite boutique, cardiovascular assessment, nutrition education, psychosocial assessment and counseling, symptom management including pain management, rehabilitation, and support groups, such as our Lifestyle Management Program.

CANCER REHABILITATION

Approximately 75 percent of cancer survivors have at least one physical problem that affects their quality of life. Rehabilitation can help with physical problems plus help overcome limitations caused by cancer and cancer treatment, including fatigue, sleep issues, and pain. Occupational and physical therapy are available to improve both the function, mobility, and strength of cancer patients. Rehabilitation can also increase each patient's ability to care for themselves and reduce the support needed from caregivers.

CARDIO-ONCOLOGY

Unfortunately, some cancer treatments increase the risk of heart failure, hypertension, heart rhythm abnormalities, and heart attack. The cardio-oncology clinic provides a comprehensive evaluation of cancer survivors who have heart disease or who have the risk factors for developing heart problems. Specialized laboratory testing and sophisticated strain echocardiographic imaging help identify or predict heart disease before the damage occurs.

SPEECH PATHOLOGY

Speech pathology provides evaluations and therapy designed to address swallowing and communication problems, most

common among people with head and neck cancer. New speech pathology services added in 2017 include virtual reality biofeedback that allows patients to see their swallow activity during therapy; evaluations that address articulation, voice, and tracheoesophageal puncture prosthesis changes; and fiberoptic endoscopic evaluations of swallowing.

EXPANDED NUTRITION COUNSELING

Nutrition counseling services are available to all patients receiving cancer treatment at the Cancer Center. Nutrition services are focused on cancer-diagnosis-related symptom management, including poor appetite, unintentional weight loss, and cancer-treatment-related side effects such as nausea/vomiting, taste changes, diarrhea, and dry mouth. Dietitians also assist in managing feeding tubes and IV nutrition therapies.

At the Cancer Center, our dietitian's goal is to help patients maintain optimal nutrition throughout treatment to ensure the best outcomes. Our team collaborates with physical, occupational and speech therapy, social workers, RNs, and physicians on a daily basis to help meet the needs of each individual patient.

BOUTIQUE

In July 2017, we opened the patient boutique on the second floor of the Cancer Center. Our buyers carefully selected a variety of items which appeal to our patients and staff, including books, cookbooks, apparel, hats, compression stockings, blankets, robes and inspirational items. The boutique is primarily staffed by volunteers, but our retail pharmacy staff are also available to assist patients with their selections. All Cancer Center visitors are invited to come, browse, and shop!

Our entire supportive care team looks forward to working collaboratively with community physicians, dietitians, nurses, and therapists to support our patients throughout their journey. The Supportive Care and Survivorship Program strives to maximize survival and quality of life for each patient's unique needs.

Learn more about this program online at dignityhealth.org/UACC by selecting the Supportive Care and Survivorship page.

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