

# cancer care

Hearst Cancer Resource Center



Dignity Health.  
French Hospital Medical Center

Hearst Cancer Resource Center

## About Cancer Care

*Hearst Cancer Resource Center at French Hospital Medical Center provides comprehensive support services for all cancer patients in our community at no charge, and appreciates the generosity of our donors who make it all possible.*

## Grace, Gratitude and Patience: A Survivor's Story

*As told by Summer Batlle*



It's pretty ironic that I find myself writing my story of survivorship on exactly the six-year mark of being disease free from stage 1 Adenocarcinoma—a type of colon cancer. I had gone to many doctors trying to figure out why my abdomen was feeling the way it was. Regardless of the many painstaking tests I went through, they kept coming back clear. Finally: A colonoscopy in December of 2016 caught a tumor inside my colon. I instantly became a very squeaky wheel and

managed to land a surgery at USC in less than a month. On January 26, 2017, I was admitted for what ended up being a cancerous tumor that was removed from my rectosigmoid junction. I woke from surgery to my stoic colorectal surgeon saying, "The tumor we successfully removed from your rectosigmoid junction was cancerous. Your 30 lymph nodes are clear. You're cancer free." While coming out of anesthesia it took me a bit to comprehend those words of *cancer*. I was 37 with two young children ages five and seven. How could this even be possible? Colon cancer isn't typically found in active 37 year olds. Later I learned through genetic counseling my cancer came from a mutated Chek2 (inherited) gene.

The healing process took some time. Along with some hurdles I had to overcome as a portion of my intestines were removed, I began to accept there would be a "new normal." One day I would feel great and the next I would quickly be reminded to just breathe and focus on one hour at a time if need be.

I was given great advice from a fellow survivor. She encouraged me to "give myself grace." Giving myself grace through this journey has been a priceless gift, along with gratitude and patience.

Through this health journey I learned how to be my own self help advocate. I fought hard and loud. I found doctors who would fight along side me to get insurance on board, and I wasn't willing to waste any time.

I've gained more from becoming a survivor than I could have imagined. There truly seems to be a silver lining for those dark clouds. I've deeply bonded with other survivors. There's an undeniable connection between warriors fighting for their lives. Every story is unique, each diagnosis is different, the process is so personal, but the deep passion for life and to overcome unites us like family.

I couldn't fathom my journey without my family and friends. My husband has been my rock and an exceptional partner through it all. I wouldn't trade my diagnosis or my life with anyone. I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be. Living in love, six years cancer free.

# Learning about Colorectal Cancer



**Lin Soe, MD**  
Hematology & Oncology

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third most common cancer for both women and men. The lifetime risk of having colon or rectal cancer is about four percent, or four out of 100 persons. The risk is about 25% higher for males over females and 20% higher for African Americans.

## Risk Factors

Ten percent of CRC is due to inheritable genetic mutation, 70% is related to non-genetic causes, the other 20% is also familial, but with no identified genetic mutation. Most inherited forms of colon cancers follow the development of a polyp.

Non-inheritable “sporadic” CRC can be caused by inflammatory bowel diseases like ulcerative colitis, but can also be from dietary habits, obesity or diabetes. Diet is a major contributor to CRC. Observation has been made to estimate that for every 50 grams of processed meat consumed per day, the risk of CRC increases by approximately 16%, and for every 100 grams of red meat consumed per day, it increases by approximately 12%.

Another risk factor is smoking. Smokers are 25% more likely to develop CRC, and smokers have higher CRC-related deaths by 14-37%, when compared to non-smokers.

Alcohol may also play a role causing CRC. Alcohol drinkers have increased risk of CRC. Moderate drinkers (2-3 drinks per day) increased risk by 13-28%; heavy drinkers (4+ drinks a day) increased CRC by 27-81%. No increased risk was seen for light drinkers (one or less drink a day).

## Prevention

The most effective way to reduce the deaths from any type of cancer is prevention. Even though it is impossible to eliminate CRC as a health risk completely, the risk can be markedly reduced by one's changing lifestyle and commitment to doing the screening for early detection.

## Lifestyle and Diet

Vegetarian diets have also been associated with a significantly reduced risk of CRC. The most benefit was seen with pesco-vegetarians (avoiding meat except fish, seafood, eggs, and dairy). Calcium intake of 1,200 mg per day was shown to decrease CRC risk by 22%, when compared to low daily calcium intake.

Physical activity is also beneficial in preventing CRC. One study found a 27% reduced risk of colon cancer when comparing the most versus the least active. Another study confirmed a 20% reduction of the risk of CRC with five hours per week of activity.

*Continued*

**Even though it is impossible to eliminate colorectal cancer as a health risk completely, the risk can be markedly reduced by healthy lifestyle choices and commitment to doing the screening for early detection.**

### **CRC Screening and Early Detection**

Prevention of CRC is easy and extremely effective, but unfortunately underutilized.

The gold standard of the CRC prevention is by screening colonoscopy. Direct visualization with colonoscopy or CT-colonoscopy are effective in finding precancerous adenomas and cancer lesions at the early stage. Colonoscopy can detect CRC with 89-95% reliability, while computed tomographic colonography can do so with 89% reliability.

The age for screening colonoscopy varies with each family history. The general public is recommended to get a colonoscopy by age 45-50. Screening recommendations for those with inheritable familial CRCs should be initiated by 10 years before the age of the youngest family member when the cancer was diagnosed.

Other screening methods such as stool tests are also available for people with no increased risk for CRC, based on the personal or family history. Cologuard can detect CRC with a 93% reliability and 43% reliability for the detection of precancerous adenoma. Other stool tests are available but are not effective in detecting precancers; they are still reasonably reliable in detecting cancer.

Early detection of CRC can dramatically reduce the risk of dying from CRC. Detecting and removing precancerous adenoma that has not grown or spread, can save a person 100% from dying of CRC. Detecting early, localized CRC and removing it can still reduce the CRC-related death by 95%, while the detection and the removal of a regional cancer in the surrounding tissue or lymph nodes, can prevent the CRC-related death by 70-80%.

As of today in San Luis Obispo County, 47% of CRCs are diagnosed with local stage, 26% with regional and 25% with late advanced stage. The remainder are of unknown stage. CRC is the third leading cause of cancer death in the United States. This shows that a lot of improvement can be made from more robust screening, effective public education and improved access to the screening programs.

To learn more about colorectal screening in our area, please call **805.542.6234**.

### **Updates in Colorectal Cancer**

*Join this Zoom call to learn the newest information on colorectal cancer treatment, including clinical trials. Question and answer session included.*

**WHEN:** Tuesday, March 14 • 5:30 pm

**WHERE:** Virtual/Zoom, SLO

**PRESENTED BY:** Lin Soe, MD, Hematology & Oncology

To RSVP, contact: [hcrc@dignityhealth.org](mailto:hcrc@dignityhealth.org) or call **805.542.6234**



Participating in wellness activities can help boost treatment, support mental health, reduce side effects and contribute to the effectiveness of care.

## Wellness Classes to Enhance Your Care

Wellness classes and activity can be helpful to the care and healing of the individual while going through cancer treatment and after treatment is complete. As advised by many medical professionals, wellness activities can help boost treatment, support mental health, reduce side effects and contribute to the effectiveness of care. With the help of wellness programs such as: Tai Chi Chih, Qigong, Acupuncture, Yoga, and Guided Meditation, these can help to mend the body while also being a way to support the immune system to engage current treatment. Physical activity can have a supportive impact on the rate of recovery and survival of cancer patients and can be an essential component to the success of treatment. The Hearst Cancer Resource Center is happy to offer an assortment of wellness programs for local cancer patients and survivors. Please ask your doctor which classes may be right for you before attending. Call or email Hearst Cancer Resource Center for details: [hcrc@dignityhealth.org](mailto:hcrc@dignityhealth.org)

- **Tai Chi Chih:** Every Wednesday, outside at 11:00 am, San Luis Obispo
- **Qigong:** Every Wednesday outside, Los Osos
- **Guided Meditation:** First Wednesday at 5:00 pm, Virtual/Zoom
- **Restorative Yoga:** Third Thursday at 4:00 pm, Virtual/Zoom
- **Acupuncture:** Third Monday at 2:30 pm, in-person at HCRC
- **Energy Balancing:** Second and Fourth Monday at 11:00 am, in-person at HCRC and Virtual/Zoom

### APPEARANCE CENTER

## Regain a Renewed Sense of Self and Confidence



Hearst Cancer Resource Center is very proud that we have so many resources available to the community at no cost to the patient or the family. These items can be life changing for cancer patients during and after treatment. “Knitted Knockers” are a handmade, free alternative to a prosthetic breast form for women who have had a lumpectomy or mastectomy of either one or both breasts. They are handmade here locally, but are part of a larger organization that does beautiful work. If you or a friend is in need of any of these resources, please reach out to us: **805.542.6234** or [hcrc@dignityhealth.org](mailto:hcrc@dignityhealth.org).

[www.knittedknockers.org](http://www.knittedknockers.org)

# Thank you!

Hearst Cancer Resource Center salutes the generosity and spirit of community members who banded together in creative ways to support local cancer programs and services.

In the last few months of 2022, several local businesses and groups held fundraisers for the Hearst Cancer Resource Center at French Hospital, raising a combined **\$49,000** to support local cancer patients. We express our appreciation to all of the local organizations that helped achieve this goal: Cal Poly Softball, Central Coast Brewing, cycletribe, Derby Wine Estates, Hotel San Luis Obispo, Laguna Middle School, Movement For Life, Morro Shores Golf and Bocci Ball Tournaments, Orange Theory Fitness San Luis Obispo, Piazza Hospitality, Poor Richard's Press, Sea Pines Ladies Golf Tournament, Sunset Honda, Surfing for Hope and more!



**You can support our work by making a donation today.**

Please visit [SupportFrenchHospital.org/HCRC](https://SupportFrenchHospital.org/HCRC), call the French Hospital Medical Center Foundation at 805.542.6496 or mail your gift to the Foundation at 1911 Johnson Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.



## Advisory Committee Member Spotlight

### Christine Williams

*Q: How long have you been a part of this committee and what is something that you are proud of contributing to?*

I have been involved as a member of the Advisory committee for HCRC over the past two years and find it an honor to participate, helping to create community awareness of the various programs available to help and support patients, family and caregivers during the diagnosis, treatment and aftercare, as well as actively raising money for two on-line fundraisers during Covid.

*Q: Why is HCRC important to you and/or this community?*

I am just one example of the universality of cancer with recovery from breast cancer now 18 years behind me. Not a single day goes by that I don't think about the pervasiveness of this disease—for me and my loved ones. I am so grateful that our community has a resource like HCRC to help all of us when in need.

*Q: What is something personal that you enjoy and want to share?*

I moved to the Central Coast 11 years ago from Chicago. I totally love this glorious state, and believe it is the most beautiful one in our great country. Yet, I love my hometown, Chicago, and if you haven't visited the Windy City, I would be delighted to help you plan your trip and experience great architecture, food, music, theatre, art, sky-line, museums and shopping!

## Turn to us for answers

### HEARST CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

1941 Johnson Avenue, Suite 201,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
805.542.6234  
Monday–Friday  
9AM–4:30PM  
[dignityhealth.org/hcrc](http://dignityhealth.org/hcrc)

Please call for an appointment.

**Thomas Spillane, MD**  
*Medical Director*

**Shannon D'Acquisto**  
*Director, Cancer Survivor*  
HCRC@dignityhealth.org

**Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN**  
*Nurse Navigator*

**Lauren Jermstad, MSW, LCSW**  
*Social Worker*

**Kiersten Arnaudin, MSW, LCSW**  
*Social Worker*

**Eloisa Medina**  
*Patient Navigator*  
805.786.6130—en español

**Teresa Fernandez**  
*Lay Patient Navigator*  
805.458.4526—en español

**Angela Fissell, RD**  
*Registered Dietitian*

**Ramie Castilleja**  
*Program Coordinator*

**Lisa Steinbeck**  
*Cancer Registrar*

### IMAGING CENTERS

FHMC San Luis Diagnostic Center  
1100 Monterey Street, #210,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
805.542.9700

FHMC Women's Health and  
Imaging Center  
1941 Johnson Ave., Suite 104,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
805.597.6700

### SLO ONCOLOGY & HEMATOLOGY HEALTH CENTER

715-B/C Tank Farm Road  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Direct: 805.543.5577

*Care Providers:*  
**Thomas Spillane, MD**  
*Medical Oncology Director of  
Clinical Trials*  
**Gorgun Akpek, MD, MHS**  
**Robin DiBiase, NP, OCN**  
**Daniel Lewis, MD**  
**James Malone III, MD**  
**Lin Soe, MD**  
**Tim Souchek, PA**

### SLO INFUSION CENTER

715-B/C Tank Farm Road  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Direct: 805.786.6140  
Nurse Line: 805.786.6144

**Susan Diaz, RN, OCN**  
*Director*

### DIGNITY CANCER CARE CENTRAL COAST

Mission Hope Cancer Center  
1325 East Church Street, Suite 102  
Santa Maria, CA 93454  
805.219.HOPE (4673)

850 Fair Oaks Avenue  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
805.474.5300

**Katherine Guthrie**  
*Senior Regional Director,  
Cancer Services*

**Kathleen Sullivan, PhD, RN**  
*Vice President, Post Acute Care and  
Health Services Operations*

### ADDITIONAL SERVICES

DIGNITY HEALTH HOME HEALTH  
& HOSPICE  
800.549.9609

PALLIATIVE CARE  
805.739.3950

### COASTAL CANCER PARTNERS

The Hearst Cancer Resource Center has partnered with these organizations to bring programs and activities to the community:

**17 Strong**  
[seventeenstrong.org](http://seventeenstrong.org)

**American Cancer Society**  
[cancer.org](http://cancer.org)

**Camp Kesem Cal Poly**  
[campkesem.org](http://campkesem.org)

**Cancer Connections**  
[cancerconnectionsslo.org](http://cancerconnectionsslo.org)

**Cancer Support Community**  
[cscslo.org](http://cscslo.org)

**Cancer Well-Fit Program**  
[cancerwell-fit.com](http://cancerwell-fit.com)

**Central Coast Dragon Boat Association—Central Coast SurviveOars**  
[ccdba.org](http://ccdba.org)

**Hats for Hope**  
[hatsforhope.com](http://hatsforhope.com)

**Jack's Helping Hand**  
[jackshelpinghand.org](http://jackshelpinghand.org)

**Leukemia and Lymphoma Society**  
[lls.org](http://lls.org)

**SabesWings**  
[SabesWings.org](http://SabesWings.org)

**Surfing for Hope**  
[surfingforhope.org](http://surfingforhope.org)

**Teddy Bear Foundation**  
[teddybearcancerfoundation.org](http://teddybearcancerfoundation.org)



**Dignity Health**

French Hospital Medical Center

**Hearst Cancer Resource Center**

Mailing address:  
1911 Johnson Avenue,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Street address:  
1941 Johnson Avenue, Suite 201,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

**HCRC Advisory Committee**

*French Hospital Medical Center*

**Patrick Caster**—PRESIDENT AND CEO

**Julia Fogelson, MSN, RN**—COO, CNE

**Nancy Bussani**—INTERIM

VP PHILANTHROPY

**Thomas Vendegna, MD**—CMO

**Debbie Wettlaufer**—CFO

*Committee Members*

**Sandy Dunn**—CHAIR

**Gayle Cekada, MD**

**Edwin Hayashi, MD**

**Jack Hearst**

**Stephen Hearst**

**Stephen Hilty, MD**

**Robert Johnson, MD**

**Noreen Martin**

**Susan Minker, MD**

**Don Oberhelman**

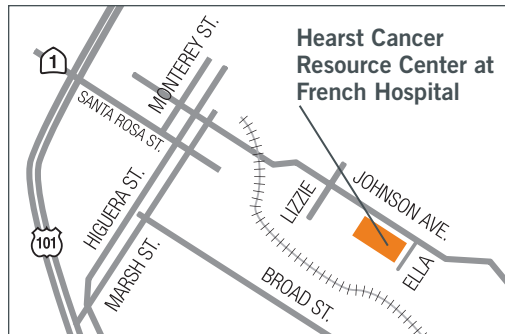
**Colleen Russell, DPT**

**Thomas Spillane, MD**

**Jackie Starr**

**Christine Williams**

**Hearst Cancer Resource Center**



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*Commission on Cancer Community Cancer Program*

1911 Johnson Avenue  
San Luis Obispo, CA, 93401  
805.542.6234



A QUALITY PROGRAM  
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OF SURGEONS



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