

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.

Diary of a Breast Cancer Survivor



By Brooke Parker

Two years ago, when a lump was discovered, I made a doctor's appointment. Within two weeks I had a biopsy. I was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma breast cancer

at age 38. I had a bilateral mastectomy with sentinel lymph nodes removed and breast reconstruction. My genetic tests were negative for other cancers and there is no family history of cancer. My lymph nodes were clear, but the results of the Oncotype test required six rounds of chemotherapy. After chemotherapy, I was placed on hormone therapy, which I will be on for about five years.

Because of wanting to get my treatment up and running, I did not have the time or the money to freeze any eggs or embryos. I have no children and, unfortunately, I'm not sure if I ever will. That hurts as much as my diagnosis, but I am thankful to be alive and for all the love from my family and friends.

Approximately 30 percent of newly diagnosed cancers in women will be breast cancers. Nearly 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. These women are your co-workers, your friends, your sisters and your mothers. There is currently no cure for breast cancer, but progress is being made every year.

Even though this is a club nobody wants to be a part of, I have joined a sisterhood of amazing new friends and have met so many wonderful people. I have had the experience of learning to surf through Surfing for Hope and I had the opportunity to be chosen for a Victory Trip from 17 Strong. I have hope for the future and a newfound appreciation for life and am so thankful for my faith that pulled me through and keeps me going.

I'll leave you with this—advocate for yourself and remember, you know your body best! From my breast cancer experience I remind you again to do your self-checks or just ask a friend, and if something seems off, follow-up with your doctor, like I did. It could save your life!

“The thing about being brave is it doesn't come with the absence of fear and hurt. Bravery is the ability to look fear and hurt in the face and say, ‘Move aside, you are in the way.’”

— Melissa Tumino



Welcome Lauren Jermstad

We welcome Lauren Jermstad, LCSW, to our team and newly created Clinical Social Worker position. She comes to us from working with foster families in our community. She is passionate about Dignity Health, cancer and supporting others. She has tremendous passion to contribute positively to the wellbeing of others and wholeheartedly believes that every person deserves to feel supported as they navigate significant life changes. Lauren has been personally touched by having close family members with cancer and understands what a patient and their family need to process this significant disease in their lives.

Lauren had additional training in trauma, life adjustments and the impact of change and loss, all of which are true for the cancer journey. She is excited to share her skills and human kindness with our community. As a social worker, she is trained to both support patients with her own tools, as well as have insight to connect patients to additional outside resources, when appropriate.

By adding a clinical social worker we are excited to be able to offer expanded support and programs that can specifically address the mental health needs and concerns that are present during a cancer diagnosis, as well as having cancer in the family. This addition will also enable us to offer psycho-social insight for our expanding platform of services.

Most people diagnosed with cancer often express some form of depression, sadness or anxiety about their health, their ability to take care of their family or their finances.

Hearst Cancer Resource Center, together with Lauren, is excited about the possibilities, the additional support it will provide families in our community and the continued growth of our center. As with all things in our center, these new services are free of charge.

This program addition was made possible in part due to a generous donation from Karen and Steve Chubon.

Please join us for our upcoming education:

Updates in Prostate Cancer Treatment

WHEN: Tuesday, September 14, 6:00PM

WHERE: Zoom

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Tom Spillane

To receive the Zoom link please email:

hcrc@dignityhealth.org or call ***805.542.6234***

Multiple Myeloma



By Gorgun Akpek MD, MHS (Dr. G)

Multiple myeloma is a blood disorder that is characterized by increased number of clonal (same type) plasma cells in the bone marrow with excess production of monoclonal protein in the blood or urine causing tissue injury or organ failure. The median age at diagnosis is approximately 70 years. In Western countries, the frequency of myeloma is likely to increase as the population ages.

Myeloma patients can present with profound fatigue due to anemia, confusion due to high serum calcium, kidney failure, back and ribcage pain. Bone fractures are not uncommon. Diagnosis is made by bone marrow biopsy, done in the clinic with local anesthesia, if blood and urine tests are suggestive of this disease.

In recent years, the introduction of stem cell transplant—and the availability of medication such as lenalidomide, and bortezomib, and more recently monoclonal antibodies—have changed the management of myeloma and extended the overall survival rate.



Today's Treatment

We treat patients with symptoms and active disease immediately. However, asymptomatic (smoldering) myeloma requires only clinical observation since early treatment has shown no benefit. The level of response to treatment, and remission (i.e., no detectable disease) is associated with an improved long-term outcome. Younger patients who have a complete response after autologous transplantation have long life expectancy.

We consider less intensive treatment approaches in patients over 75 years old or those with other medical conditions who are not candidates for intensive therapy and transplant. We recently implemented tailored treatment approach at SLO Oncology & Hematology for each patient according to that patient's risk factors.

In summary, myeloma, once a frightening disease, is now considered a chronic disease with remissions and relapses. We have many new drugs already approved by the FDA, while new ones are in the pipeline that have future potential.

Mammograms Save Lives



Early detection can make all the difference. Breast cancer doesn't discriminate — young, old, rich or poor — it touches 1 in 8 women (cancer.org). It doesn't always show symptoms, but mammograms can find lumps before a woman can feel them, which is why getting screened is the best way to find breast changes at the earliest signs of the disease. In fact, a mammogram could be the difference in finding cancer now, or at a later stage, that can be more difficult to treat.

Screening guidelines:

- Women age 40–45 and older should have a mammogram annually (cancer.org)
- Younger women with a close family relative with a breast cancer diagnosis should ask their doctor if screening may be warranted younger than age 45
- Women should also know how their breasts normally look and feel and report any changes to a health care provider right away
- Every woman should have a conversation with her physician about the best plan for her

Hearst Cancer Resource Center and French Hospital are proud to share that because we are a non-profit hospital, a portion of all of our work supports the under-served, and this year is no exception. As of the writing of this article, we have supported the screening of more than 50 local women, who would have been otherwise unable to afford to get a mammogram. For some of these women, it was a first ever mammogram. We set aside one evening each month to offer free mammograms to the under-served in our community.

If you or someone that you know fits into this category and you would like to know more about our mammogram clinic please call our office at 805.542.6234 or email: HCRC@dignityhealth.org

If you would like to help support this program to make our charitable work go further, feel free to make a donation to our program.

Please join us for our upcoming education:

Updates in Breast Cancer Screening and Treatment

WHEN: October, 12, 5:30PM

WHERE: Virtual Zoom presentation

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Robert Johnson and Dr. Fred Verneccchia

To receive the zoom link please email: [**hcrc@dignityhealth.org**](mailto:hcrc@dignityhealth.org)

Share Hope and Gratitude by Supporting the Hearst Cancer Resource Center

At this time of year, we often reflect back on what we are grateful for in our lives—people, places and experiences that have impacted us in some way. Many people choose to express their gratitude by making a gift to support organizations with causes near to their hearts. This year, we hope that you will consider making a gift to the Hearst Cancer Resource Center (HCRC).

Show your support of the HCRC during the month of October by participating in Share Hope—a peer-to-peer fundraising effort benefiting the HCRC. Make a donation or help raise funds to support local cancer patients! To learn more, visit SupportFrenchHospital.org/ShareHope.

Thanks to support from people like you, this unique center is able to provide all programs and services at no charge to cancer patients and their families, ensuring that all local cancer patients have access to the vital resources that the HCRC provides.

You can help make sure that free services are always available to those who need them by donating to the HCRC today. And know that 100 percent of every gift goes directly to support the HCRC.

To make a gift, visit SupportFrenchHospital.org/ShareHope, call the French Hospital Medical Center Foundation at 805.542.6496 or mail your gift to the Foundation at 1911 Johnson Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA, 93401.



Free services include:

- **Nurse navigator to guide, advocate and support patients through their journey**
- **Support Groups**
 - *All Blood Support Group*
 - *Breast Cancer Support Group*
 - *Caregiver Support Group*
 - *Living With Cancer Support Group*
 - *Prostate Cancer Support Group*
 - *Spanish Support Group, en Español*
 - *Young Survivor Support Group*
- **Social services, programs, one-on-one, family, and financial resource support**
- **Nutritional counseling with our Registered Dietitian**
- **Lay Patient Navigator**
- **Wellness tools to aid in holistic well-being and relaxation**
 - *Energy Balancing*
 - *Guided Meditation*
 - *Intuitive Collage*
 - *Lymphedema Evaluation*
- **Appearance center with hats and wigs**
- **Exercise and strengthening classes**
 - *Pilates*
 - *Tai Chi Chih*
 - *Qigong*
 - *Yoga*
- **Educational presentations from local and national experts**
- **Transportation Support**

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
HCRC is temporarily closed to walk-ins.
Please call for assistance.

Thomas Spillane, MD
Medical Director

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

Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN
Nurse Navigator
Julie.Neiggemann@dignityhealth.org

Lauren Jermstad, MSW, LCSW
Social Worker

Eloisa Medina
Lay Patient Navigator
805.786.6130—en español
Eloisa.Medina@dignityhealth.org

Angela Fissel, RD
Registered Dietician

DIGNITY CANCER CARE CENTRAL COAST

Mission Hope Cancer Center
1325 East Church Street, STE 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*
CENTRAL COAST SERVICE AREA
805.346.3434
Katherine.Guthrie@dignityhealth.org

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

SLO ONCOLOGY & HEMATOLOGY HEALTH CENTER

715-B/C Tank Farm Road
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Direct: 805.543.5577
Infusion Center Front Desk:
805.786.6140

Care Providers:
Thomas Spillane, MD
*Medical Oncology Director of
Clinical Trials*
Gorgun Akpek, MD, MHS
Diane De Vos Schmidt, FNP-C
Robin DiBiase, NP, OCN
James Malone III, MD
Tim Souchek, PA
David Harrison, MD

IMAGING CENTERS

FHMC San Luis Diagnostic Center
1100 Monterey St #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 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

Viridiana Ruiz
Oncology Counselor

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

American Cancer Society
cancer.org

Camp Kesem Cal Poly
campkesem.org

Cancer Connections
cancerconnectionslo.org

Cancer Support Community
cscslo.org

Cancer Well-Fit Program
cancerwell-fit.com

Central Coast Dragon Boat Association—Central Coast SurviveOars
ccdba.org

Hats for Hope
hatsforhope.com

Jack's Helping Hand
jackshelpinghand.org

Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
lls.org

Surfing for Hope
surfingforhope.org

Teddy Bear Foundation
teddybearcancerfoundation.org

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

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US Postage Paid
Poor Richard's Press
93401

HCRC Advisory Committee

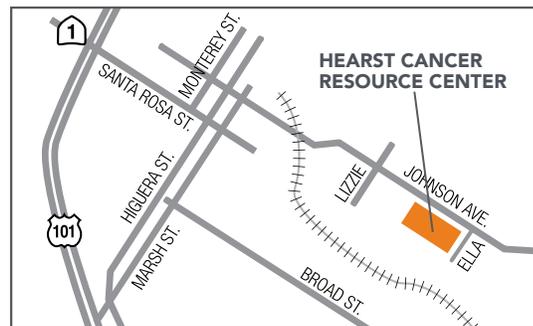
French Hospital Medical Center

- Alan Iftiniuk**— PRESIDENT AND CEO
- Julia Fogelson, MSN, RN**—COO, CNE
- Debby Nicklas**—VP PHILANTHROPY
- Thomas Vendegna, MD**—CMO

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- 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

