

cancer care

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020



Hearst Cancer Resource Center | SLO Infusion Center | SLO Oncology & Hematology

About Cancer Care

Cancer Care is a collaborative partnership between the SLO Oncology & Hematology Health Center, Dignity Health Infusion Center of San Luis Obispo and the Hearst Cancer Resource Center at French Hospital Medical Center, offering comprehensive cancer care services to San Luis Obispo County residents. As a cohesive oncology treatment program, Cancer Care features innovative technological advancements and compassionate health care professionals from the nation's top medical training programs. The culmination of these centers provides a personalized, multidisciplinary approach to oncology treatment, clinical trials, pediatric oncology, infusion services, support programs and resources to promote healing.

A graphic featuring the year "2020" in large white font, centered over a background of yellow daisies and green foliage.

2020

Wishing you a Joyous New Year!

Bev Kirkhart and the HCRC Staff

As I changed my calendar to January the reality of actually reading the year 2020 sunk in. Where did the time go? I reflected back at when Hearst Cancer Resource Center (HCRC) opened its doors in 2008 with only four programs and two staff members. Like the growing years on the calendar, HCRC support services and staff grew too. Today we have grown into 22 programs and services offered each month, all at no cost to the cancer patient or their loved ones, and a passionate staff of five ready to serve those who are just diagnosed, in treatment or beyond.

As each year passes and we turn the calendar, it presents us with an opportunity to renew our hopes for a better tomorrow. As the director of HCRC, my wish for you is a 2020 filled with optimism, love and peace. May you have a new year that is full of positive energy, thankfulness and hopefulness to allow joyous and happy moments carry us through times of darkness and challenging moments.

As a long-term cancer survivor, I know firsthand the importance of support to stay positive, hopeful and peaceful during all phases of the disease. A cancer diagnosis touches every aspect of our lives. We at HCRC are here to help you navigate the rough cancer journey, offering a steady hand so that you'll never face this disease alone. Let's celebrate the New Year together, with a re-energized spirit and a renewed hope.

All of us at the HCRC are looking forward to meeting you and serving you!



Left to right: Bev Kirkhart, Director; Cynthia Shade, Event Coordinator; Sally Bradbury, Administrative Assistant; Gloria Caine, RN, Nurse Navigator; Eloisa Medina, Lay Patient Navigator; Lisa Steinbeck, Cancer Registrar



Being a Cervivor

By Lori Stone, Cervical Cancer Survivor & Cervivor Ambassador

I heard the words, “It’s cancer...” back in 2007. Being diagnosed forever changed me, robbed me of fertility, and left me with lasting side effects. As a cervical cancer survivor, I lend my story to help others understand how my diagnosis, treatment, and loss may have been prevented with one simple vaccine.

In most cases, cervical cancer is caused by infection from Human Papillomavirus (HPV). There are many HPV strains and most are harmless. But a few high-risk strains can lead to cancer. HPV exposure affects all genders and is not a result of promiscuity, lack of judgment, or lifestyle—no one chooses to get cancer, and the virus does not discriminate. I’m proof of this.

So we must ask ourselves why HPV cancers are still taking people’s lives when we know how to stop the epidemic. Evidence points to barriers in health care, stigma, fear, and vaccination misinformation running rampant. It is why I’ve taken my survivorship and turned it into advocacy. No more misinformation. No more shame. No more stigma. Simply prevention. We have that power.

Cervivor is a community, a learning tool, an advocacy resource, and an online retreat for healing, connecting, and thriving.

Read Lori’s story at www.cervivor.org/stories/lori and contact her for support in central and southern California.



“Hope Gives Us Wings” Created by Kathleen McKinnon, local artist and cancer survivor

Where We Find Heroes

(haibun)

By Lisa Harpel

Kathleen McKinnon—teacher, artist and creative spirit—has within her the wish to help others and give back to the community. She witnessed her mother, Liz, fight a 35-year battle with breast cancer that metastasized. She saw how fragile the human body can become before it faces its return to earth. Liz passed away November 2015. In May 2016, still floating along the river of her heart’s grief from the loss of her mother, Kathleen was diagnosed with breast cancer. She dug deep into her soul to find strength, relied on her faith, and had the loving support of her husband, family and friends to help her cope during the most difficult days of treatment. Completing chemo/radiation in February 2017, her doctor declared her cancer-free. Shortly thereafter, she channeled her thoughts and emotions into an art journal, “My Healing Companion,” which illustrates her journey through mixed media and is available for viewing online.

In August 2017 she opened The Snuggery; an art space filled with paint, craft supplies, and creative energy, where cancer survivors, supporters, friends and caregivers can visit and express themselves through art, at no charge. She then started working on a large-scale, 3-D collaborative art project, “Hope Gives Us Wings.” Made with brightly colored painted paper and collage backed by wood, it features words of inspiration and encouragement written on the wings’ feathers. Completed August 2018, it is on display at the Hearst Cancer Resource Center, where she conducts free, monthly art collage classes.

*storms may come bringing
uncertainty, hold hope close
that clouds will give way to sun*



Emotional Wellness Through a Cancer Diagnosis

By Lindsey Levenson, MS, LMFT

“You have cancer.” Three words no one ever wants to hear. But, unfortunately, so many of us have been on the receiving end of that conversation. What follows are a slew of thoughts and feelings that can feel overwhelming. Fear, worry, sadness. You may find your mind racing or that you’re having difficulty sleeping. Finding ways to manage those thoughts and feelings can be an integral part of your care.

Our doctors, nurses, and pharmacists review potential side effects of this diagnosis and its treatments. The lists are long... pain, dry mouth, headaches, nausea, fatigue. We gear up for how to manage the side effects and move forward. But what about the emotional side effects? The ways in which the diagnosis and treatment affect our mental and emotional well being. Well, the good news is that many of these things are normal and expected. And, because they are normal and expected, there are also ways to manage them and move forward.

Strategies like mindfulness can be effective in stopping the worrisome thoughts that just seem to keep coming. Expanding your support system can help in finding ways to express and move past feelings of sadness and anger. As you become educated in ways to manage the emotional side effects, the thoughts and feelings can start to feel less overwhelming and out of control.

Join me in the upcoming series that will help address both what the emotional impact of a cancer diagnosis can look like (for both the patient and their support system) and what to do about it. Strategies will be discussed, as well as ways to move forward and find meaning in an often very challenging experience.

Coming in March:

Emotional Wellness Through a Cancer Diagnosis

A FOUR SESSION SERIES FOCUSING ON:

1. What to expect? What’s normal?
2. Managing fear and anxiety
3. Finding ways to cope
4. Finding a sense of meaning.

This program is made possible through the support of the Martin Hulburd Family Cancer Education Fund to the Hearst Cancer Resource Center, and is offered as a community service.

"The good news is that this cancer threat can be permanently eliminated with a vaccine."

— Thomas Spillane, M.D.
SLO Oncology & Hematology



Increasing Vaccination Rates can Eliminate Cancer

By Thomas Spillane, M.D., SLO Oncology & Hematology

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) results in cancer in approximately 35,000 Americans every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). HPV is the same virus that causes warts. An estimated 80 million Americans have HPV, with roughly 14 million people (mostly teens and young adults) becoming infected each year. The virus can cause cancer of the mouth, throat, cervix and genitalia, which is most successfully treated when detected early. Unfortunately, too many cases are still detected at later stages, often requiring surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. Once metastasized, these cancers are inevitably fatal. As an oncologist, I am a daily witness to the suffering caused by these tenacious cancers.

The good news is that this cancer threat can be permanently eliminated with a vaccine. The current FDA-approved vaccine, called Gardasil, is a non-infectious treatment containing particles that protect against HPV. The vaccine has been recommended for use in females since 2006 and males since 2011, and there are no side effects or associated complications. The vaccines went through extensive safety testing before

being offered in 2006. Approximately 300 million doses of the vaccine have been given worldwide, including 100 million doses in the United States. Studies continue to verify that Gardasil is very safe. The bad news is that in the US we are doing a poor job at vaccinating our youth.

In theory, if we vaccinate between 83 and 94 percent of a population, we can eliminate a disease. This concept is called “herd immunity.” An HPV-related example of this was recently published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Oropharyngeal cancers (cancers of the mouth and throat) have been rising in an epidemic fashion and recently surpassed cervical cancer as the most common HPV-caused cancer. Unlike cervical cancer, precancerous lesions of the oropharynx are not routinely screened for, which makes prevention of infection a priority. The JAMA publication reported that between 2009 and 2016, rates of HPV vaccination in both males and females increased, while rates of oral HPV infection among unvaccinated men dropped, explained by herd immunity.

So, given the clear consensus on the benefits, since the introduction of the HPV vaccine in 2006, how are we doing? A number of countries around the world, such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and Denmark, have nationally mandated vaccination programs and have achieved very high vaccination rates. In some African countries where PAP smear screening was essentially non-existent, cervical cancer was the leading cause of cancer deaths in women. That is changing through vaccination programs. As, an example, Rwanda may be the first country to eradicate cervical cancer through extensive HPV vaccination coverage with the Ministry of Health reporting that 93% of girls now receive the vaccine.

Having said that, how has the United States been doing at preventing HPV-related cancer, given this rather miraculous therapy? Embarrassingly terrible. A 2015 based national survey estimated vaccine coverage among adolescent females and males was 63 and 50 percent, respectively, for at least one dose and much lower for the recommended 2 or 3 doses. When parents were asked in a survey as to why they were not vaccinating their children, the most common reasons were: the vaccine was not needed, the vaccine was not recommended, they had concern about vaccine safety, they had no knowledge about the vaccine benefit and lastly, there was a lack of sexual activity in their children. Lack of opportunity, however, does not appear to be a major reason for low vaccine coverage. Of the un-vaccinated females in the surveys, 84 percent had at least one medical visit at which they were given a different vaccine but not the HPV vaccine.

The implications of this information should be alarming to all of us. Some experts estimate that by increasing complete-dose HPV vaccination coverage to 80 percent in females, approximately 53,000 additional cases of cervical cancer alone could be prevented in the United States over the lifetimes of those currently aged ≤ 12 . This estimation did not even take into consideration the oropharyngeal cancer crisis. It would be unthinkable today to not have a child buckled up or wearing a seat belt in a car. We make sure that our kids wear helmets when riding bikes and skateboards. We seem to understand prevention pretty well: there is no point in putting on a helmet or seat belt after the accident. Yet, nearly half of our children are allowed to roll the dice with a potentially deadly yet preventable cancer. I would argue that the HPV vaccine is even easier and more convenient than the previous examples. (What if you could prevent motor vehicle death by buckling up your seat belt just twice in your life-time)?

So, what can we do? Continuing to idle along as we are currently is not an option. For the first time in history we have the unprecedented opportunity to eliminate a specific type of cancer. Goals have been set by the CDC of reaching 80% vaccination rates by 2020 and 85% by 2026 (the twenty-year anniversary of the vaccine's approved use). Answers are not easy, but as a community we can make these goals a reality. Current efforts are focused on education, legislation and funding. Please pass this information on and help put an end to HPV-related cancer.

The Facts on HPV

- Routine HPV vaccination is recommended for both boys and girls at 11 to 12 years.
- It can be administered starting at 9 years of age.
- For adolescents and adults aged 13 to 26 years who have not been previously vaccinated or who have not completed the vaccine series, catch-up vaccination is recommended.
- In October of 2018, the FDA expanded the use of Gardasil 9 to include adults age 27 to 45 on an individual basis.

Roadmap to Resilient Living Talk

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Arash Asher, Director, Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship, Cedars-Sinai Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute

WHEN: Thursday January 9, 2020 at 5pm

WHERE: Mission Hope Cancer Center in Conference Room, 1325 E. Church Street, Santa Maria

Reservations are required. Please call Mission Hope Cancer Center at **805.219.4673**.

WHEN: Friday January 10, 2020 at 12pm

WHERE: Mission Hope Cancer Center in Conference Room (3rd Floor), 850 Fair Oaks Avenue, Arroyo Grande

Reservations are required. Please call Mission Hope Cancer Center at **805.474.5300**.



Roadmap to Resilient Living after Receiving a Cancer Diagnosis

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Asher, *Director, Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship, Cedars-Sinai Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute*, on January 9th and 10th, as he educates us and outlines his goals of optimizing physical, psychological and spiritual resilience for patients with cancer.

Dr. Arash Asher's special interests lie in the physical and rehabilitative needs of cancer survivors who continue to experience the effects of their cancer and its treatment. His expertise in the management of pain, cancer-related fatigue, and cognitive dysfunction, as well as many other side effects, reflects his passion for improving the outcome of patients with cancer. Dr. Asher has also been instrumental in developing unique cancer survivorship programs with his colleagues, including *Emerging from the Haze* (living with the perceived effect of cancer treatment on cognition), and *GRACE* (Growing Resilience and Courage).



Thinking Pink, Sea Pines Ladies Golf Tournament Donation

The Sea Pines' annual Think Pink Ladies Golf Tournament on Oct. 8, 2019 generated more than \$4,500 through entry fees and auction items. This donation goes toward the HCRC Angel of Hope fund, which provides immediate financial assistance for basic medical needs of cancer patients in treatment and their families.

Thank you Sea Pines Ladies Golf Club!

Turn to us for answers:

HEARST CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

1941 JOHNSON AVENUE, SUITE 201,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
805.542.6234
OPEN MONDAY–FRIDAY
9AM–4:30PM

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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

American Cancer Society

Cancer Connections

Cancer Support Community

Cancer Well-Fit Program

Jack's Helping Hand

Central Coast Dragon Boat Association—Central Coast SurviveOars

The Wellness Kitchen and Resource Center

SLO ONCOLOGY & HEMATOLOGY HEALTH CENTER

715-B/C TANK FARM ROAD
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President and CEO

Alan Iftiniuk

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Julia Fogelson, MSN, RN

FRENCH HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER

Vice President, Philanthropy

Debby Nicklas

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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

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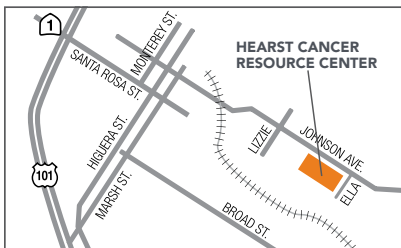


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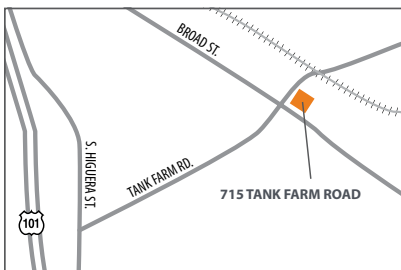
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Street address:
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San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dignity Health Cancer Care Centers



Hearst Cancer Resource Center
Commission on Cancer Community Cancer Program
1911 JOHNSON AVENUE
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA, 93401
805.542.6234



SLO Oncology & Hematology
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If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please visit dignityhealth.org/frenchhospital