

cancer care

MARCH/APRIL 2021



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.

Welcome Julie Neiggemann, Hearst Cancer (HCRC) Nurse Navigator



Please join us in welcoming, Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN, to HCRC as a new Nurse Navigator. She comes to HCRC with a deep passion to help patients navigate the cancer journey, coordinate their cancer care, and offer a guiding hand for support and understanding.

Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN brings experience in both oncology and education to her position as an oncology nurse navigator. She received a BS in nursing from Biola University and discovered her passion for working with patients with cancer during nursing school. She has loved caring for both adult and pediatric patients in hematology and oncology throughout her nursing career. Julie also received her MS in nursing education and taught in a nursing program in the Los Angeles area for several years before moving back to the area.

She values delivering health care with empathy and compassion, and a commitment to whole-person care.

Julie, a Central Coast native, returned to live closer to her twin and other family members. She enjoys hiking and being outside on the beautiful Central Coast, portrait and nature photography, traveling, and spending time with her family and friends.

For more information or to schedule an appointment with her, call **805.542.6234**

Please join us for our upcoming meetup:

Ask the Nurse Navigator

WHEN: Thursday, March 11 at noon

WHERE: Virtual Zoom presentation

PRESENTED BY: Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN

Reservations are required. Please email

JulieNeiggemann@dignityhealth.org or call

Hearst Cancer Resource Center at **805.542.6234**.

Valid email, name and phone number will be required for Zoom invite.

San Luis Obispo Hematology & Oncology Health Center: Update on Clinical Trials

These are exciting times for cancer treatment. As the biotechnology industry is exploding, so are the new approaches to the management of this deadly disease. We are now in an era where we utilize a "personalized" approach to most cancers, taking advantage of each cancer's unique genetic and molecular susceptibilities. While we are still using chemotherapy, more and more we are incorporating targeted therapies and immunotherapies. The obvious goal is to improve outcomes with less toxicity. To ensure that new treatments are safe and effective, they must be tested in a "clinical trial" setting.

Clinical trials are generally divided into phase I, II and III. A simplified explanation is that a phase I trial is designed to determine treatment dose and toxicity; phase II to determine effectiveness and a phase III trial is designed to determine if the treatment provides a benefit beyond standard, currently available therapy. For patients that are willing to participate in a clinical, this is an opportunity to use newer technology but most importantly to further our understanding of the optimal management of cancer.

Our team at SLO Oncology & Hematology and the Common Spirit Health Research Institute are part of the National Cancer Institute Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP). This is a national network of cancer research programs that bring cancer clinical trials to people in their own communities. This means that often we are able to enroll patients in the same trials that are being offered at the large university teaching hospitals.

Current trials are available for virtually all cancer subtypes and are most often incorporating non-chemotherapy treatments. Exciting approaches that are being investigated often focus on cancer genetic mutations or protein expression. If you or a family member has cancer, ask about clinical trial opportunities.

Please email Amy Hidalgo, Clinical Trial Coordinator at Amy.Hidalgo@dignityhealth.org



French Hospital Introduces Lifesaving Diagnostic Technology for Blood Cancers Thanks to Donor Support

French Hospital Medical Center recently introduced new lifesaving technology in the clinical laboratory department. CellaVision offers a proven technology called Digital Cell Morphology which replaces or complements manual microscopy to create an automated digital workflow to detect life-threatening blood cancers.

This automation removes the laborious and tedious aspects of performing blood cell analysis, making better use of staff and skills while empowering the hospital laboratory to deliver faster and more standardized test results.

"Time is of the essence when diagnosing blood cancers," says French Hospital Chief Medical Officer and Hematology Specialist, Jim Malone, MD. "With this critical technology, we can offer greater efficiency, quality, and staff proficiency."

The purchase of this significant medical technology was made possible by a donation from Steve and Barbara Hearst. Steve Hearst is a longtime supporter of the Hearst Cancer Resource Center at French Hospital and continues to be a strong advocate for enhancing cancer services for our community. The Hearst family and foundation were instrumental in supporting the opening of the Center and creating a permanent endowment.

French Hospital continues to be incredibly grateful to Steve and Barbara Hearst for their generous support and unwavering dedication to cancer patients in our community. The addition of the CellaVision technology will further French Hospital's mission to expand cancer services for our community.



March is colorectal cancer month!

By Tom Spillane, MD, San Luis Obispo Hematology and Oncology Health Center

What does this mean? Well first off, this is a reminder that screening is the best way to ensure early detection and the best chance of being cured. In Covid times, this is becoming more cumbersome for a number of reasons. Hospitals may have to delay elective procedures because of Covid constraints. Additionally, patients at high risk of complications from Covid are deciding to delay screening to reduce their risk of Covid exposure. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines recommend screening for people age 50 to 75 and up to 85 in certain individuals. High risk individuals (family history/genetic predisposition, inflammatory

bowel disease or prior polyps) should have a colonoscopy. Average risk individuals may be candidates for screening via fecal based screening tests (Check with your doctor). Fecal based screening tests look at occult blood and exfoliated DNA for evidence of cancer. Cologuard is an example of this and can be done from home and mailed in for analysis.

Second reminder for colorectal cancer: What's better than early detection? Well, that would be prevention. Current recommendations are to maintain a healthy weight, stay physically active, and eat healthy all of which seem increasingly more difficult in the setting of an unprecedented world-wide pandemic. What constitutes a healthy diet? Some studies suggest that a healthy diet includes eating less red and processed meat and more fruits and veggies. Also drink less alcohol and do not smoke. (no surprises here). Should we take vitamins? Experts recommend that we obtain nutrients from natural food sources rather than dietary supplements. Having said that Vitamin D has shown to be beneficial in some studies and if low, should be supplemented. Low dose aspirin may be of benefit in higher risk patients.

Lastly, what's new in the way we treat colorectal cancer? Well, so much that there is not enough space here to tackle this topic in adequate detail. Suffice it to say that management is with a multi-disciplinary team involving gastroenterologists, pathologists, surgeons, medical oncologists and radiation oncologists. The treatment plan depends on a number of factors such as the stage of the cancer as well as the cancer biology. Advancements in all aspects of care are resulting in better outcomes, more cures and longer survival times.

Remember: Screening saves lives! Speak to your doctor about screening options. To learn more, join our talk with Dr. Spillane:

Please join us for our upcoming meetup:

Ask the Doctor: Colorectal Education

WHEN: Tuesday, April 13 at 6pm

WHERE: Virtual Zoom presentation

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Tom Spillane

Reservations are required. Please email JulieNeiggemann@dignityhealth.org or call Hearst Cancer Resource Center at **805.542.6234**. Valid email, name and phone number will be required for Zoom invite.



April is Head and Neck Cancer Awareness month!

By Gina Rotondo, MS, CCC-SLP

Head and neck cancer (HNC) makes up around 4% of all cancers, affecting over 60,000 people in the US annually. HNC impacts a survivor both functionally and aesthetically. Effects from radiation or surgery may negatively impact a person's ability to eat and drink due to difficulty opening the mouth, poor saliva production, difficulty chewing, and taste changes.

Other complications include vocal changes, impaired speech, and anatomical changes to the face and neck. The list of long-term side effects can be overwhelming at any point in diagnosis, treatment, and remission. The importance of having a support system amid navigating these issues unique to HNC patients can positively impact recovery. A support group can assist in meeting psychosocial needs of patients, provide education and awareness specific to HNC needs, and promote physical and emotional health to patients, caregivers, and family. It has been a pleasure to take part in facilitating such support groups at Mission Hope Cancer Center in Arroyo Grande.

COVID-19 has posed significant challenges to provide social interaction and general benefits of in-person support groups. Since June 2020, Mission Hope Cancer Centers of Arroyo Grande and Santa Maria have combined forces to transition our in-person meetings to bi-monthly virtual meetings for our Support for People with Oral Head and Neck Cancer (SPOHNC) groups. I and my colleague, Yamini Balasubramanian, speech language pathologist, join group members from across SLO and SB counties to answer each other's questions, provide general support, and simply check in with one another. We welcome all HNC patients, family members, and friends.

Please join us for our upcoming meetup:

SPOHNC Support Group

WHEN: Tuesday, April 20 at 3:30pm

WHERE: Virtual Zoom presentation

PRESENTED BY: Gina Rotondo, MS, CCC-SLP with Guest Speaker Dr. Wilkinson, Radiation Oncologist of Mission Hope Cancer Center

Reservations are required. Please call Hearst Cancer Resource Center at 805.542.6234 or email Ashley.Hahn@dignityhealth.org. Valid email, name and phone number will be required for Zoom invite.

HEAD AND NECK
CANCER
AWARENESS MONTH
APRIL



Head and Neck Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Technology

By Tom Spillane, MD, San Luis Obispo Hematology and Oncology Health Center

The majority of cancers of the head and neck are a type of cancer called squamous cell carcinoma. Unfortunately, we have seen a surge in this type of cancer in the past 15 years. The exponential rise is occurring because of the human papilloma virus (HPV). Whereas in the 1990s the majority of head and neck cancer was HPV- negative (associated with chronic tobacco use), we now see an ever-increasing prevalence of HPV positive cancer in young, never-smokers with a latency of 10 to 30 years after exposure to the virus. The Gardasil vaccine for HPV was first FDA approved in 2006 and is currently approved for cancer prevention in both men and women up to age 45. It is recommended that the vaccine be given as early as age 8 to 9 to ensure antibody development prior to exposure to the virus.

The treatment of head and neck cancers is rapidly improving such that the majority of patients can be cured of what was once a uniformly deadly disease. Treatment is with a multi-

disciplinary team that includes a host of ancillary providers including specialists in dentistry, swallowing, speech, nutrition, hearing, pain management and psychosocial support. If detected in its earliest stages, surgery alone can be curative. For more advanced head and neck cancer curative treatment may require chemotherapy and radiation. The introduction of concurrent radiosensitizing systemic therapy and definitive radiotherapy (chemoradiotherapy) have improved survival among patients with head and neck cancer and especially those with HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancer.

Once the cancer has spread out of the head and neck and into other parts of the body (metastatic cancer), unfortunately it is not considered curable. Chemotherapy and targeted antibody-based therapies are used to halt the cancer progression. Recent advances, however, are dramatically changing patient outcomes. These exciting treatments include the use of immune-checkpoint inhibitors. These non-chemotherapy treatments trick the body's own immune system in to removing cancer cells.

Clinical trials are investigating the use of targeted therapy and immune therapy in earlier stages of the disease in an effort to improve cure rates with less toxicity. Advances in treatment along with awareness of vaccination and early detection will undoubtedly result in continually-improving success in the management of this cancer.



Virtual Energy Balancing sessions now offered

Please join HCRC in Energy Balancing, using the methods provided by our team of certified practitioners, which has been proven effective through dozens of peer reviewed studies to help significantly relieve stress, anxiety, and depression, reduce pain levels, release emotional blockages and accelerate the body's natural healing abilities. It is also complimentary to western medical practices, which is why hundreds of hospitals and clinics across the country and the world have implemented programs like ours.

While all of us have missed the experience of personal interaction the in-person sessions provide, the virtual Energy Balancing clinic has been a resounding success; it has also given our team and our clients an opportunity to get to know one another better and explore techniques we wouldn't necessarily utilize for in person sessions, such as opening meditations and group energy balancing work.

As one of the participants stated: I have to admit I had no idea what to expect from the online Energy Balancing program. For me, the best part is the peace I feel at the end of each session. All my anxiety seems to drain away and I am left feeling energized and ready to meet the challenges of the day. What a gift! Thank you!

HCRC Energy Balance virtual sessions are held the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 11:00am. Please call HCRC for more information at 805.542.6234.

Back by Popular Demand: Prostate Support Group on Zoom

The Prostate Cancer Support Group on Zoom provides a forum promoting open discussion for men to learn about prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment options. This group is a relaxed setting for men, in the comfort of their home, to discuss issues, exchange information and get answers to their concerns.

In the prostate support group, facilitated by Scott Wilcox a prostate survivor, you will find other patients whose journey is similar to your own, yet still bring new insights from their own perspective, as well as their own first-hand knowledge of their prostate cancer journey. There is much to learn about what to expect from treatments to medication to the different side effects of treatment medications. These other prostate survivors can help to provide an understanding of the disease and instill a sense of hope.

Please join this positive and uplifting Zoom session held on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 pm. For more information about the Prostate Cancer Support Group and to register for the Zoom session contact Hearst Cancer Resource Center at 805-542-6234.

Turn to us for answers:

HEARST CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

1941 JOHNSON AVENUE, SUITE 201,
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
805.542.6234
HCRC is temporarily closed to walk-ins.
Please call for assistance.
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
- Central Coast Dragon Boat Association—Central Coast SurviveOars
- Jack's Helping Hand
- Surfing for Hope

SLO ONCOLOGY & HEMATOLOGY HEALTH CENTER

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IMAGING CENTERS

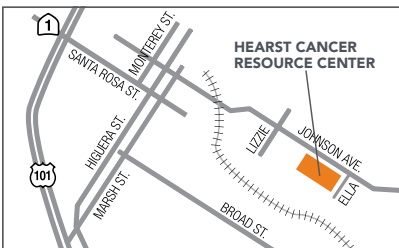
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FHMC WOMEN'S HEALTH AND IMAGING CENTER
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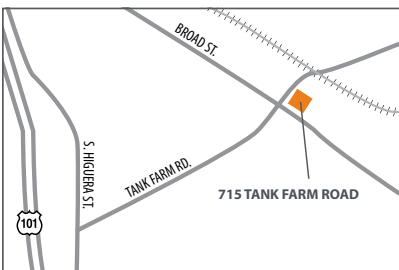
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Dignity Health Cancer Care Centers



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