# cancer care

Dignity Health®

Hearst Cancer Resource Center



# 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



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.

# 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.

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 Vernecchia

To receive the zoom link please email: 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-onone, 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

cancerconnectionsslo.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** 

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

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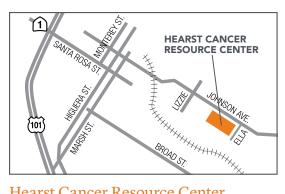
#### **HCRC** Advisory **Committee**

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# **Hearst Cancer Resource Center**



#### Hearst Cancer Resource Center

Commission on Cancer Community Cancer Program 1911 Johnson Avenue San Luis Obispo, CA, 93401 805.542.6234



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