

THE SPECIALIST



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A day of healthy eating and learning with your doctor

**THE BROOKLYN
CANCER CENTER**
EXPANDING IN BROOKLYN!

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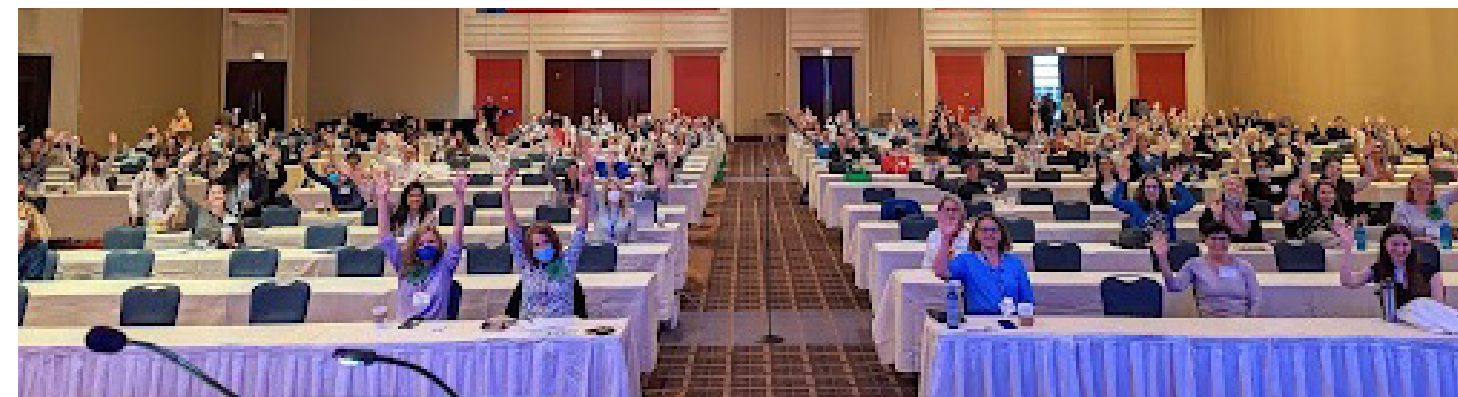
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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

My Friends,

As we move into the middle of summer 2022 and toast America's 246th birthday, I am confident that we will remain a nation caring to our neighbors in need and generous to those struggling. Patriotism comes in various forms but always involves serving something bigger than ourselves. It is the precedent of New York Cancer & Blood Specialists' (NYCBS) existence and why our mission is to provide world-class, patient-centered care to patients with cancer and blood disorders in their communities, close to family and friends.



Our cover issue of the July Specialist features our expansive footprint in Brooklyn, bridging the gap for patients to receive high-quality cancer treatment close to home. Through partnerships, including a collaboration with the Physicians of Memorial Sloan Kettering, we can bring the same level of expertise and high-quality care to more patients in areas previously underserved.

Elsewhere in the issue, you'll find features on NYCBS oncologist Dr. Lynn Ratner, recognized for his exceptional commitment to patients and colleagues and his unparalleled contribution to cancer care and the communities he served over his tenure. You'll find a fascinating story on how Nurse Practitioner JoAnne Palladino keeps a legacy alive, advocacy and legislative news, nutritional programs and updates, upcoming events, and more.

We also included QR codes on all our social media channels, so Follow, Like, Comment, Share, and never miss a beat!

Warm regards,

Dr. V



JoAnne Palladino, RN, MSN, OCN

STORIES

Keeping The Legacy Alive

By Peter LiPera

A year after JoAnne Palladino's mother became a nurse practitioner, she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and placed in hospice care. Seeing how the home health care aide interacted and cared for her mother inspired her to enter the medical field.

When JoAnne arrived at the home health aide course, she sat in her car staring at the building and could not get out. "I heard my mother's voice in the back of my head," JoAnne said. "Why are you going to pay to become a health home health aide when you can become a nurse and do so much more?" So Joanne completed nursing school and joined New York Cancer and Blood Specialists (NYCBS).

JoAnne worked as a nurse for over ten years, following doctors' orders and caring for patients as if they were family. But, eventually, she knew she wanted to add her own touch



to patient care. "I have extreme empathy for the patients," she said. "Both my mother and father died of cancer. So I know what it feels like being told the news and what the next steps are on what to do." So when

she heard her mother's voice in the back of her head again, encouraging her to pursue more education, she finally decided to take advantage of the NYCBS tuition reimbursement program and became a Nurse Practitioner.

As a mother of three daughters, it was a challenge for JoAnne. She recalls being unable to attend sports and other events as she studied. Nevertheless, she did her best to find time to be an integral part of her children's lives. She explained what it was like to finish her schooling, "It took me ten years because I did it slowly at my own pace while raising a family."

JoAnne remembers feeling relieved at graduation with her family lined up in the small auditorium.

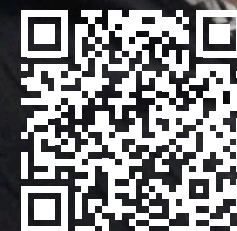
She said, "It was very important at my graduation that my daughters were present so they could see how hard work pays off and what you can accomplish." After graduation, her youngest daughter approached her independently and

asked if she could also become a nurse. "I was proud of her and a little scared for her because it's not an easy job," JoAnne admitted. A few years later, JoAnne's daughter graduated from nursing school and is currently an NYCBS nurse in Riverhead.

"My mother's shoes are big ones to fill, but I know she'd be proud," she said. "So I try to pass on her wisdom, lead by example and keep her legacy alive." Together, JoAnne and her daughter certainly do.



Watch The Video Now!



Living With Metastatic Breast Cancer

By Candice Hulse

New York Cancer Foundation Advocate

Senior Director, Organizational Development & Strategic Alignment



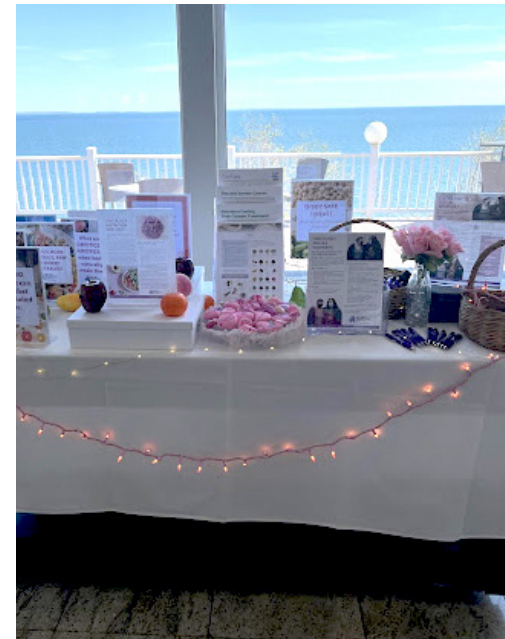
On Saturday, April 30th, 2022, NYCBS physicians and Metastatic Breast Cancer patients gathered at the Port Jefferson Country Club for a day of love, support, and education!

The New York Cancer Foundation, with the support of Pfizer and Mondays at Racine, planned a day for patients Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer moderated by the esteemed Dr. David Chu. After a light breakfast and refreshments, the event commenced with a lively, open-forum conversation starring Dr. Alfredo Torres, Dr. Yelda Nouri, Dr. Joseph Cirrone, Dr. Isaac Hardoon, MaryAnn Fragola, Dr. David Mangiamelli, and Dr. Susan Palleschi. This talented Physician Panel covered incredibly challenging topics while expressing palpable solace to the patients in attendance.

The day continued with numerous segments on cutting-edge research, interventional radiology, psycho-oncology, and financial counseling. Sprinkled throughout the agenda were breakout sessions where patients and loved ones could browse the exhibition hall and receive information on nutrition and wellness services, including onsite offerings at NYCBS locations and offsite community partnerships through Mondays at Racine and Strength for Life.

The event's highlights, however, were two patient testimonials in partnership with Pfizer's A Story Half Told and NYCBS. Adina and Ruth shared stunningly raw yet authentically beautiful insights into the realities of Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer.

As the event came to a close, I stood on the balcony at Port Jefferson Country Club's Waterview Restaurant. The calm ambiance of a Saturday afternoon filled the air as I watched the sunlight dance across the Long Island Sound. Reflecting upon the sheer beauty of happenstance, I couldn't help but feel completely humbled, albeit overwhelmed, by the patients I met. The strength it takes to look at the unknown face-to-face each day is something I cannot quite wrap my mind around. These women had a profound impact on my life and how I view my role as a healthcare administrator. I am forever indebted to their honesty and vulnerability.



Lynn Ratner, MD

Medical Oncologist

New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS) has announced the retirement of Dr. Lynn H. Ratner, an oncologist recognized for his exceptional commitment to patients and colleagues and his unparalleled contribution to cancer care and the communities he served.

Dr. Ratner joined the NYCBS staff in 2018 and has served as Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine and Neoplastic Disease at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and Education Coordinator for Medical Oncology at Lenox Hill Hospital.



Over his 60-year tenure, Dr. Ratner was repeatedly named one of NYC's Top Doctors, an honoree of the Physicians Attending Association Award for 50 years of service at Lenox Hill Hospital, and a frequent speaker and presenter at medical conferences on the topics of breast cancer, lung cancer, and colorectal cancer.

Dr. Ratner completed his undergraduate degree at Union College. Then, he received his medical degree and Doctor of Philosophy from Albert Einstein College of Medicine. During his senior year, Dr. Ratner was elected to shadow a surgeon, which sparked his interest in research and the biology of breast cancer. For that reason, during his internship, he chose to be at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, where he concluded his residency.

When he graduated, he joined Dr. Ezra Greenspan, a well-known oncologist at Mount Sinai. Dr. Greenspan was the first physician to use chemotherapy for breast cancer. Dr. Ratner enjoyed working with patients, and as time went on, more treatment options for breast cancer became available. Since then, he has been involved in different types of

chemotherapy, and hormonal therapies have always been one of his major interests. "It allowed me to treat patients more sophisticatedly," Dr. Ratner said. "I was able to approach the disease by using the biology of the tumor. "

Dr. Ratner has extensive research and written publications in his field. He is the author of Contemporary Diagnosis and Management of Breast Cancer, a 309-page medical handbook on breast cancer used by medical and nursing professionals. From 2006 to 2010, Dr. Ratner was the Principal Investigator for a trial of new medicine to treat neuroendocrine tumors of the pancreas and GI tract. He also participated in two major trials for non-small cell lung cancer and other trials for the treatment of Ovarian Cancer. As a result of his expertise and experience, Dr. Ratner was interviewed on several news channels discussing the need for genetic testing in breast cancer and the heightened interest in preventative mastectomies.

Dr. Ratner has served the Public Health Service Communicable Disease Center (CDC) for two years in Puerto Rico, studying vaccine trials and caring for patients with various types of epidemiology. Dr. Ratner witnessed the whole spectrum of disease treatment change throughout his career. "Aspects of chemotherapy have morphed into something truly special," he said. "We now have new drugs and immune therapies that are important for patients. I am blessed to have been part of that. "

Although Dr. Ratner will miss being at the forefront, his children have followed in his footsteps. His daughter and son-in-law are pediatricians, and his granddaughter is taking prerequisite courses in college for medical school. Family is an integral part of Dr. Ratner's life, and he is excited to spend more time with them. He also hopes to enjoy more theater shows and create new collage art, another passion of his.

NYCBS is profoundly thankful to Dr. Ratner for impacting countless patients' lives and helping shape its world-class culture.

Nancy Wunderlich

East Setauket Radiation Receptionist

Nancy Wunderlich has been part of the New York Cancer & Blood Specialists family for 29 years. She has had a wonderful time throughout her career journey and has learned so much.

Nancy started in 1993 managing the front desk for Nuclear Scanning Associates; an imaging center owned by the practice's previous name, North Shore Hematology Oncology Associates (NSHOA). The position was part-time, so she also worked in the main office in the billing department. When the company opened its first radiation therapy center in Setauket at 181 Belle Meade Road, Nancy took the front desk position full-time.

Although Nancy studied nutrition at Farmingdale State College, she spent the following 16 years raising her two boys. Her oldest son, Frank, worked as a radiation therapist at NYCBS for eight years alongside Clinical Director of Radiation Oncology Sean Hyland. She loved having her son work with her during that time.

"I've enjoyed my job, my coworkers, and have always felt great satisfaction in working in a field that helps so many," said Nancy. "I was blessed to see some real miracles during my time. I've realized how precious life is and to live every day to the fullest."

In the next chapter of Nancy's life, as she moves into retirement, she plans to travel and spend time with her family and friends.



Martin Silverstein, MD

Nancy Wunderlich

Joseph Cirrone, MD



New York Cancer Foundation (NYCF) is a non-profit organization offering financial assistance to qualifying patients under care for a cancer diagnosis in the Greater Metro Area (within the counties of New York City, as well as Nassau & Suffolk). The Foundation strives to relieve some of the financial burden patients face by helping with non-medical expenses so they may focus on their treatment and healing. Some of the day-to-day living expenses with which we may assist are:

- Rent or Mortgage payments
- Utility payments such as water, sewer, electric
- Landline or cell phone payments
- Transportation to and from cancer treatment via Uber Health
- Other expenses on a case-by-case basis

Throughout all of 2021, the NYCF helped a total of 142 patients and provided 668 Uber Rides. As of the end of May, we have already helped 157 patients and have provided 841 Uber Rides - we are proud to announce we have surpassed the total of patients we assisted in all of 2021 already!

How did we do it? In several important ways...

- The Foundation has hit milestones - Victoria Lucido, Foundation Coordinator, and Paige Montana, Project Manager, are coming up on their first anniversary at the Foundation in July and August. Victoria concentrates on the grant applications and Paige focuses on the events and incoming donors.
- The Foundation has expanded! Our Executive Director, Tina Toulon, immediately started implementing changes when she started in November. Kiely Hagland, our Administrative Assistant, began in March and has hit the ground running!
- The Foundation works closely with interoffice departments - each month, we receive more inquiries and could not do it without the help of our clinical staff, social workers, and financial counselors. Our site visits are also valuable in educating our staff and patients!
- The Foundation makes connections - our network includes community organizations that send potential applicants, donate wigs, supply raffle and auction items, and more.
- The Foundation has the incredible support of the Physicians and staff here at NYCBS - much of the donations have come from internal donations, which shows the passion that flows through the company.

As one of our grant recipients recently told us:

"OMGoodness! Thank you so much! I am going to cry! This is the only organization where I speak to any of you, I want to cry. Your hearts are in this! I can tell. I feel it in my own heart."

And that is why we do what we do—dedicated to finding ways to help our grant recipients each and every day.



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UPCOMING NYCF EVENTS!



**RUN THE VINEYARD
JULY 24TH
LIMITED REGISTRATION**

Join us for a beautiful 5K Run/Walk through Pindar Vineyards' 500-acre property and finish with a fun-filled after-party on the pavilion
Tickets- \$35-45



**2ND ANNUAL
RAISING HOPE GALA
NOVEMBER 17TH**

A glamorous evening at the Water's Edge in Centerport - live music, live auction, and much more.



**4TH ANNUAL
RAISING HOPE GOLF CLASSIC
AUGUST 22ND
LIMITED REGISTRATION**

This year's Raising Hope Golf Classic will take place at the Nissequogue Golf Club
**Dinner Tickets- \$225
Individual Golfer Ticket- \$650**



**PATIENT
APPRECIATION DAY
SEPTEMBER 24TH
FREE EVENT**

A Day at the Carnival - Enjoy music, carnival games, pumpkin patch, painting, BBQ, and much more!
Free for all patients and NYCBS staff!

If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Paige Montana or Kiely Hagland or scan the QR code to the right

In addition, NYCBS offers 5,000 reward points to staff members who dedicate their time to improving the lives of our patients outside of work hours.





PRIDE

Design By: Juliette Vacirca

New York Cancer & Blood Specialists(NYCBS) is proud to celebrate the LGBTQ+ staff and patients in our communities by sponsoring the annual Long Island Pride Parade on June 12th in Farmingdale Village. The Pride Parade displayed plenty of rainbows, smiles, and Love.

The Pride Parade celebrates the strides the LGBTQ+ network has made over the past three decades. NYCBS attended the event “celebrating Love is Love.”

NYCBS provided giveaways such as mini fans, koozies, bracelets, stickers, and so much more. Many people visited the NYCBS booth for more information. We were excited to have members from different departments volunteer at this event, showing our unity.

Together, we can promote a culture of diversity and inclusion. Inclusion makes us stronger, and everyone equally should be treated with respect and dignity.



PARADE







Expanding in Brooklyn

NYCBS has bridged the gap for patients to receive high-quality cancer treatment close to home. Through partnerships, NYCBS has expanded our footprint by opening four sites in Brooklyn, enabling us to bring the same level of expertise and high-quality care to more patients in areas previously underserved.

The expansion began in 2020 when NYCBS partnered with the Brooklyn Hospital and opened The Brooklyn Cancer Center (TBCC) at 121 Dekalb Avenue. TBCC is staffed by Chief of Hematology and Oncology, Dr. Maxim Shulimovich, Dr. Asmat Ullah, Dr. Shahzaib Nabi, Dr. Shreya Prasad Goyal, and radiation oncologist Dr. Minh-Phuong Huynh-Le. Since then, the center's productivity and efficiency have increased as we streamlined services to provide our patients with the care they deserve.

In August 2021, we continued our Brooklyn expansion by partnering with AdvantageCare Physicians (ACPNY), opening two new locations at 447 Atlantic Avenue and 101 Pennsylvania Avenue. These centers are staffed by Dr. Mark Grand and Dr. Goyal, well-established oncologists in the community.

All three sites offer patients various modalities to care for their mind, body, and spirit, including chemotherapy, radiation therapy, clinical trials, and wellness services, including social work, nutrition, and supportive and palliative care.

This year, we will be relocating our current TBCC facility to a new state-of-the-art treatment center at 86 Fleet Street and welcoming board-certified hematologist-oncologist Dr. Kalimullah Quadri. The new Fleet Street office will encompass numerous amenities. We will also be opening a separate radiology site down the road at 81 Fleet Place, so patients can have their scans read while avoiding unnecessary travel.

TBCC has seen a tremendous increase in new patient numbers. We have recruited and are continuing to recruit new physicians and other staff members, growing the service line. We have increased accessibility to clinical trials and continuing to enroll more patients. We are improving existing programs such as the Lung Cancer Screening Program and others of our TBH partners by bringing our expertise and philosophy to cancer care using the latest innovations and advancements.

The opening of the new TBCC opening will bring increased capacity, and an architectural atmosphere that aligns with the care we aim to provide.

Recently, NYCBS announced its partnership with Physicians of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) and its plans to open a 39,000 sq ft facility in Brooklyn, New York, in early 2023.

The new facility will house two independent practices: Memorial Medical Care, PC, which is a new practice formed by a group of MSK physicians, and NYCBS. Through this collaboration, patients will have access to a wide range of services, including advanced imaging, state-of-the-art therapies, cutting-edge clinical trials, and a multidisciplinary team of specialists providing collaborative patient care and delivering the best possible outcomes. Patients requiring complex cancer care and surgery will have direct access to MSK's main hospital in Manhattan.

The partnership will open a great new avenue for accessibility to world-class cancer care and cutting-edge clinical trials. By placing MSK and NYCBS physicians in the heart of Brooklyn, residents of Brooklyn and Queens can access the cancer care they need closer to home.



(L to R) Shahzaib Nabi, MD Minh-Phuong Huynh-Le, MD Shreya Prasad Goyal, MD

(L to R) Asmat Ullah, MD Maxim Shulimovich, DO

New York Legislative Updates

By David Eagle, M.D.

New York Cancer & Blood Specialists

Chair of Legislative Affairs and Patient Advocacy



SCAN ME
TO MAKE YOUR
VOICE HEARD

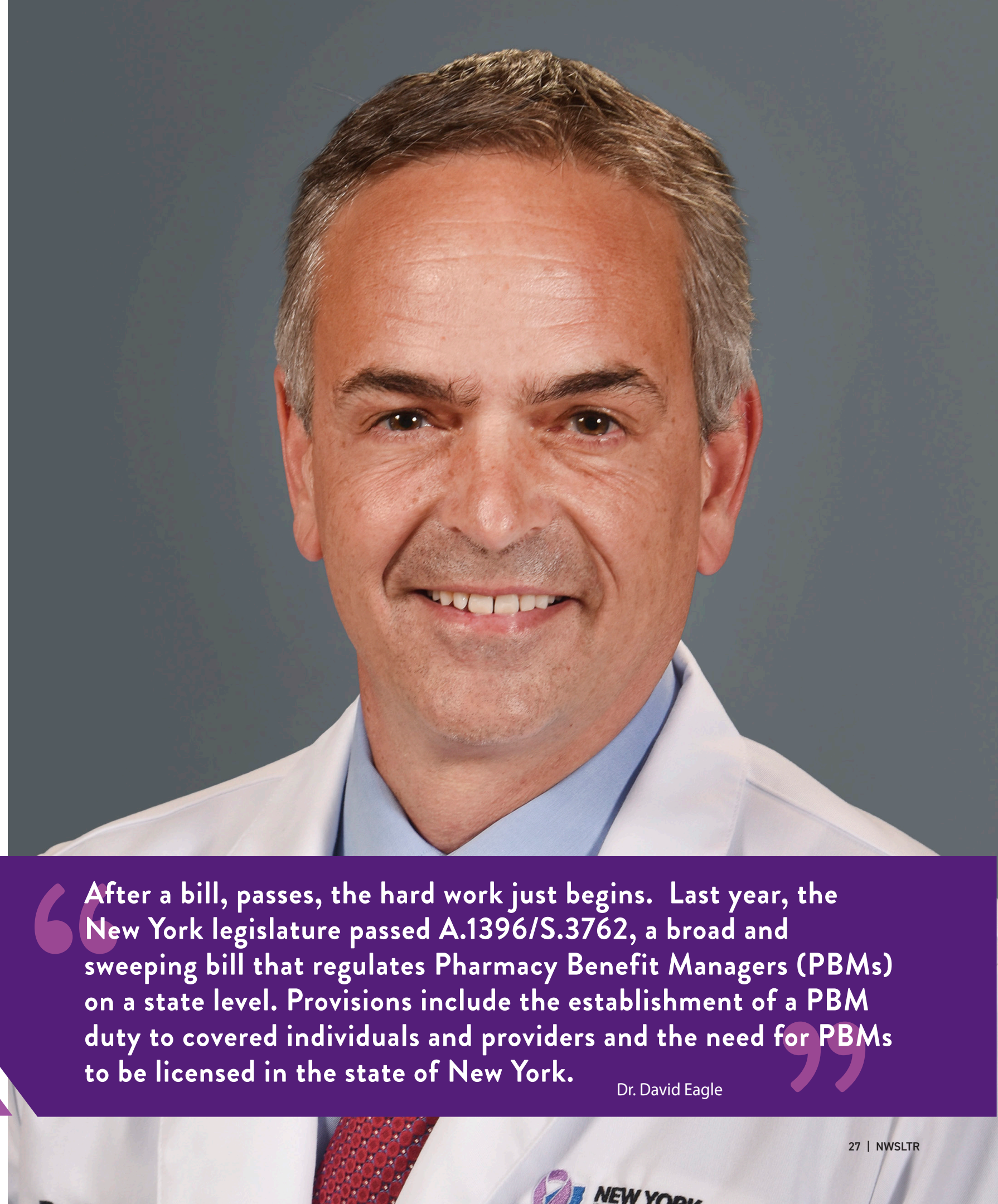
Like all legislatures, the New York legislature runs according to its own distinct rhythm. The Assembly and Senate are in session from January to early June. Any legislation that does not pass by the end of the session is done for the year. Any legislation that does pass has until the end of the calendar year to be signed or vetoed by the Governor. This usually leads to a flurry of activity in June and this year was no different.

As is typical, there was good news and bad news. Some of the good news was the passage of A.879 Gottfried/S.8299 Cleared. This legislation requires that “peer-to-peer” physicians be in the same specialty as the case that they are reviewing. The need for this may seem blindingly obvious to those of us on medicine’s frontlines. Who would go to a dermatologist for a second opinion for open-heart surgery? Nevertheless, the insurance companies have been escalating this bad prior authorization practice for years. This legislation is certainly a welcome change and we will be urging the Governor to sign it into law.

Unfortunately, the “Gold Card” prior authorization bill which would exempt doctors from prior authorization for a period of time if they have a greater than 90% track record of authorization did not make it. This legislation has been passed in Texas and is under consideration now in many other states. We hope that this valuable bill gets reintroduced next year and will do all that we can to support it. Also unfortunate was the passage of A.6770 Weinstein/S.74 Hoylman which expands the types of awardable damages in a wrongful death action. If signed by the Governor, this can be expected to increase New York’s already severely elevated medical liability premiums.

After a bill, passes, the hard work just begins. Last year, the New York legislature passed A.1396/S.3762, a broad and sweeping bill that regulates Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) on a state level. Provisions include the establishment of a PBM duty to covered individuals and providers and the need for PBMs to be licensed in the state of New York. Inappropriate PBM practices could result in the revocation of their license. Similar legislation was vetoed by the former Governor two years ago, and it was no guarantee that the current Governor would be willing to sign. New York Cancer & Blood Specialists had a call with Governor Hochul’s staff at the end of last year to encourage the signing of the bill. We subsequently had a law firm prepare a special report for the Governor’s office regarding legal challenges in other states to PBM regulations. We were thrilled that the Governor did sign the legislation leading to the establishment of the Pharmacy Benefits Bureau within the Department of Financial Services.

Just recently, we had a call with the leadership of the newly formed Pharmacy Benefits Bureau. They are now in the process of rule-making, and this will soon be available for public comment. We are impressed that the Bureau is planning adequate staffing for enforcement capabilities. It is important for oncology practices to understand this new entity. When PBMs demonstrate conduct that is harmful and unfair to patients and practices, this will be the place to go. The specific rules and regulations are now forthcoming, but it appears likely the state of New York will lead the nation in finally ending at least some abusive PBM practices.



“After a bill, passes, the hard work just begins. Last year, the New York legislature passed A.1396/S.3762, a broad and sweeping bill that regulates Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) on a state level. Provisions include the establishment of a PBM duty to covered individuals and providers and the need for PBMs to be licensed in the state of New York.”

Dr. David Eagle



Advocacy news from the Community Oncology Alliance Patient Advocacy Network (CPAN) – New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS) Chapter



Rose Gerber, M.S., Director of Patient Advocacy and Education, Community Oncology Alliance, Washington, DC

Background: Advocacy Partnership

The Community Oncology Alliance (COA) is a national organization representing community oncology (physician owned) cancer centers across the United States; we are proud to have New York Cancer and Blood Specialists (NYCBS) as a member.

COA's mission is to ensure that cancer patients receive quality, affordable, and accessible cancer care in their own communities. COA's Patient Advocacy Network (CPAN) focuses on providing education and raising awareness of independent, community cancer care and the issues that affect the quality and accessibility of cancer care at the local level. CPAN advocates include patients, survivors, caregivers, nurses, pharmacists, oncologists, and all interested members of the community.

The CPAN NYCBS chapter was launched in 2013 with the support of Chief Executive Officer Jeff Vacirca, MD, past COA board president, and Nicole Flores, Chief Administrative Officer and past CPAN Chapter Advocacy Leader. It has been an honor to work with Dr. Vacirca, Nicole, and the incredible NYCBS patients/survivors in the execution of multiple successful advocacy initiatives. Our CPAN NYCBS chapter is now led by **Brittany Kaliscik, Director of Patient Experience**. I look forward to working with Brittany on many new advocacy initiatives going forward.

Collaborative Advocacy Projects (a sampling):

- **NYCBS Patient and Staff Stories Video Project:** 25 participants including NYCBS staff members, patients, survivors, and caregivers shared their experiences with NYCBS in this educational and inspiring video project.
- **CPAN/ NYCBS Advocated on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC:** Advocates from NYCBS joined us on Capitol Hill meeting with members of congress advocating for multiple national oncology issues that impact local patient care.
- **Participation in the Community Oncology National Conference /COA Patient Advocacy Network Advocacy Program Track:** NYCBS cancer patients/survivors and advocates have participated in COA's annual conference from 2014-2022
- **CPAN NYCBS hosted multiple community events including CPAN advocacy education during NYCBS patient appreciation day**



Current Advocacy Partnership News and Updates:

Our CPAN chapters (in cancer center across the U.S) including the NYCBS CPAN chapter are inclusive of all cancer types, and we will continue this program model going forward. In addition to our CPAN all-inclusive chapter model, we are excited to share that under the initiative of **David Eagle, MD, Chair, Legislative Affairs and Patient Advocacy for New York Cancer and Blood Specialists** we launched the CPAN NYCBS Prostate Advocacy group on June 2, 2022. The virtual summit included updates on NYCBS from Brittany Kaliscik, Director of Patient Experience, and insight into advocacy concerns for prostate cancer patients from David Eagle, MD. Dr. Eagle provided attendees with updates on the rapidly evolving therapeutics and diagnostics impacting prostate cancer patients. I provided national updates on COA and CPAN. We were grateful for the participation and contributions from the prostate cancer patients/survivors that joined our launch event. The CPAN NYCBS Prostate cancer advocacy group is open to all prostate advocates in New York.



To Learn more about:

The CPAN NYCBS CPAN chapter or the new Prostate Cancer Advocacy contact Britany Kaliscik, Director of Patient Experience at BKaliscik@NYCancer.com
The Community Oncology Alliance visit our website – www.communityoncology.org
The Community Oncology Alliance Patient Advocacy Network – www.coadvocacy.org



FIRST FELLOW GRADUATES

FROM THE NYCBS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Dr. Dipen Patel graduated from Mather Memorial Hospital. He is the first Fellow to graduate from the NYCBS Fellowship Program. He is pictured with Dr. David Chu, the assistant program director of the Fellowship, and Dr. Harry Staszewski, the program director.

Dr. Patel will be joining NYCBS in August, practicing in Riverhead and Port Jefferson.

MRI With I.V. Sedation

NY IMAGING SPECIALISTS is proud to offer MRI With I.V. Sedation.

What is I.V. Sedation?

I.V. Sedation is given to our patients by a board-certified anesthesiologist to help them remain still and relaxed during an MRI scan. Lying still is critical to ensuring that the MRI pictures taken will be accurate and clear. Before the scan, the anesthesiologist will put you into a light sedated state to help alleviate any fear or anxiety. The anesthesiologist or CRNA supervised by an anesthesiologist will monitor you before, during, and after the MRI study.

Who might have an MRI with anesthesia?

Patients with certain conditions that may prevent them from staying still in the MRI machine, such as claustrophobia, anxiety, or any condition that causes physical pain, may qualify for an MRI with sedation.

What information do I need to send you before the MRI appointment?

After scheduling an appointment for your MRI, you will need to provide us with some very specific medical history information and documentation so that our clinical staff can evaluate your medical eligibility for this procedure. Please obtain a prescription from your physician, which orders the MRI with I.V. Sedation. The script should be dated within 30 days of your scheduled MRI appointment ***.

For additional information or to schedule an appointment, please call 833-269-4624.



(HDR) Brachytherapy

By Chief of Radiation Oncology Talha Shaikh, MD, MBA

New York Cancer & Blood Specialists will be offering high-dose-rate (HDR) brachytherapy across several facilities. Brachytherapy is an important part of the treatment for certain types of cancers, particularly gynecologic cancers.

HDR Brachytherapy is a radiation treatment that involves temporarily placing radioactive material inside the body, in or near a tumor, for a specific amount of time. The therapy delivers higher doses of radiation while minimizing the radiation exposure to nearby tissues. Most patients undergoing brachytherapy receive 3-5 treatments lasting 15-30 minutes each.



Talha Shaikh, MD, MBA

HDR brachytherapy sends radiation sources through a tube and into an applicator in the body by a computer-controlled machine. The radioactive source stays inside the applicator and never comes in contact with your body tissues. Therefore, only the source inside the applicator is radioactive.

NYCBS Patient-Family Advisory Council

By Brittany Kaliscik

Director of Patient Experience



The NYCBS Patient-Family Advisory Council, a group of NYCBS patients and employees, gathered at the new Executive building for their bi-monthly meeting hosted by Brittany Kaliscik, Director of Patient Experience. "I look forward to these meetings because I genuinely enjoy connecting with our patients on a personal level." She continued, "This council allows us, as an organization, the opportunity to understand the patient experience on a deeper level. It also provides a platform for patients to share their ideas and suggestions for improvement."

During this past meeting, the council members met with executives Lynn Kay Winters, Chief Quality and Learning Officer, and Sean Riley, Chief Information Officer, along with two of our IT experts, John Pazienza and Jake Zuhoski.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the recently implemented tablets that are utilized at each NYCBS front desk during the check-in process and pre-visit forms that may be sent to patients electronically.

Prior to scheduled appointments, we send email and text appointment reminders. These reminders sometimes contain important links to forms that may be required for updating prior to your visit with your doctor, along with general health questionnaires. These same forms are available on the tablet when you arrive at the office.

We reduce the number of times we ask you for your information electronically. Once you fill out your medical information, such as an insurance ID or home address, it will be applied across all of your paperwork.

- **Forms** - New patient package workflow and all other forms.
- **Screenings** - Depression, Lung & Distress Thermometer.
- **Clinical Questions** - Review of Systems(ROS), ECOG Performance Status, Vaccines Status, Pain Score & Advanced Directives.
- **Documents** - License and insurance card collection. Council members received a tablet demonstration, where they

learned about the functionality and purpose of these tablets and spent time discussing the above-mentioned forms. Council members then provided their feedback from the patient perspective on ways to further enhance the forms and tablet experience. "We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to listen to real patient feedback and concerns to understand what it is we do from a different perspective and to improve the patient experience overall," says John Pazienza, "we received invaluable feedback from the council and are currently implementing the suggestions we received during the meeting."

The Patient-Family Advisory Council is scheduled to meet again in July and look forward to welcoming new council members. If you are interested in learning more about this council or would like to join, please contact Brittany Kaliscik, Director of Patient Experience, at BKaliscik@nycancer.com

APPRECIATION



WIVES

COOKING WITH YOUR ONCOLOGIST

Patients and their oncologists will learn step-by-step cooking instructions, discuss food's nutritional benefits, and understand how to make recipes that fit into a healthy eating pattern that aligns with recommendations from cancer health organizations. "Cooking With Your Oncologist" also offers patients, their oncologists, and other practitioners and staff the opportunity to eat together and provide and receive social support.

NYCBS is strongly committed to helping patients meet their nutritional needs close to home and supporting their overall well-being. We strive to alleviate stress related to meal preparation and execution. Based on patient feedback, we created a "Cooking With Your Oncologist" program. Eating and cooking together is a terrific way to enhance the bonds we share with our patients.

In addition to the valuable information we will offer, it's also a way to enhance sociability. The opportunity to co-mingle with other cancer patients and survivors is extremely important to build bonds and foster community relations.

Any information presented throughout the program is not meant to prescribe or diagnose. We recommend you always reach out to your oncologist or healthcare provider for your individual needs.

NYCBS wants to be part of our patients' plans, share helpful tips and ideas on nutritious eating, and offer some healthy inspiration.

Join us as we:

- Walkthrough strategies to start your healthy eating journey.
- Talk about ways to stay healthy during and after cancer treatment.
- Recipe talk, meal prep strategize, enhance knife skills and learn core food safety concepts.
- Empower you with the tools to achieve your nutrition, culinary nutrition, and health goals.
- Eat and chat!
- And much, much more.

During this event, we will provide our patients with support and guidance on making a meal plan, shopping for food, and cooking delicious and nutritious meals in a fun setting. "Cooking With Your Oncologist" will motivate participants to become more comfortable in the kitchen by mastering basic kitchen skills. Learning simple steps and techniques will help participants arm themselves with the tools needed for better health and improved quality of life.

We recommend you stay connected with NYCBS via our website, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter pages. Please consider signing up to be added to our e-mail list as well.

To learn more about this program and other nutrition services, call 631-675-5063 or email nutrition@nycancer.com.

Our Registered Dietitian Nutritionists are a valuable resource for any questions about diet and health during all stages of cancer treatment. They are available to meet with you in person or via phone.

By joining us for "Cooking With Your Oncologist," you can gain knowledge, skill, and know-how. Then, take what you have learned, continue surrounding yourself with our exceptional support services and your other influences and keep striving for a healthier you.



The Importance of Validation

By MaryAnn Fragola, DNP

Patients present with a multitude of complex issues, symptoms, side effects, etc. I have learned that sometimes these symptoms are not always treated with medication, even though it is ingrained in what we do. Sometimes we validate what they are feeling and allow them to work through it, to feel it, to normalize that it is ok to feel something, whether good or bad.

I used to struggle with not having a solution to some of the ailments that my patients presented. But over time, I realized that not everything has a specific treatment. We need to tailor our regimes to the unique needs of our patients.

One of the important elements of addressing patient symptoms is the validation that goes along with it. How reassuring it is to hear- you are validated in what you feel, you are allowed to feel how you do, and you are not judged based on what it is that you are feeling. This impacts patients and gives them a sense of ownership and support.

What they are experiencing is real to them and unique to them; only they can attest to its severity. We often tell patients to stay positive, and we should always support hope and positivity, but sometimes this adds to their burden because they just want to feel what they feel at that time. Anger, sadness, distress, depression, fear, and anxiety are normal emotions that patients or families feel when patients face a cancer diagnosis.

Emotional validation is acknowledging and accepting a person's inner experience, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as valid. A person who feels validated can better manage their emotions and cope. It provides a sense of "I hear you, I believe you." Ignoring or not talking about these feelings can make patients feel alone, leading to difficulty coping and further isolation.

So, allow patients to express their mixed emotions, support them, validate them, and simply be there for them whether you agree or not. Demonstrating an understanding makes them feel heard and allows them to move forward.

The palliative team is trained to prescribe medications for many distressing symptoms, but sometimes validation is even more essential in the journey of the patient and their families. Along with the many wellness programs we offer, we can present patients with the support they need to migrate through their diagnosis.



By MaryAnn Fragola, DNP





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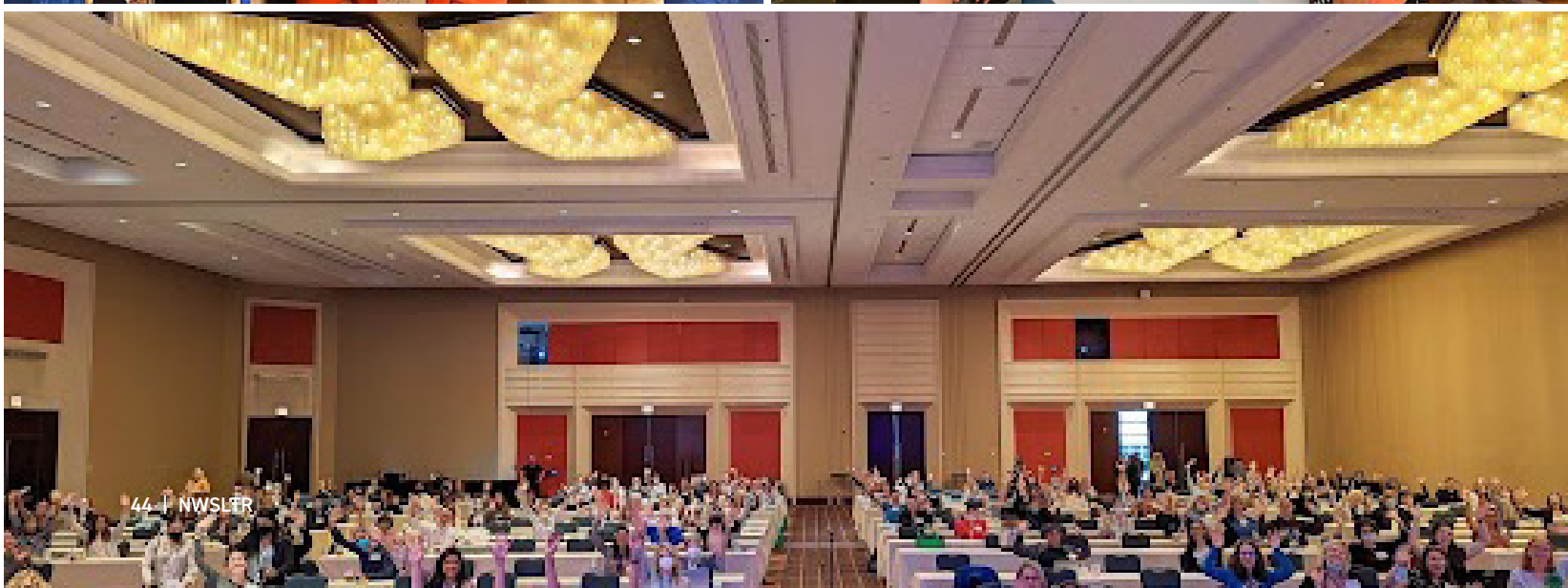
2022

Oncology Nutrition Symposium

By Wendy Kaplan MS, RDN, CSO, CDCES, CDN

Director of Nutritional Services Wendy Kaplan MS, RDN, CSO, CDCES, CDN, attended the 2022 Oncology Nutrition Symposium in Chicago from Friday, June 10th through Sunday, June 12th. The Oncology nutrition group is a specialized dietetic practice group within the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics. The symposium was chock-filled with presentations and poster sessions that highlighted the latest information on oncology nutrition in a variety of areas such as BMT, immunotherapy and CART-cell therapy, prehabilitation for #cancer therapy, malnutrition risk and sarcopenia, clinical strategies for common electrolyte and mineral deficiencies, ways to manage GI side effects, professional resilience and much more. There were a lot of great takeaways to share with the nutrition team to better help our patients. She also managed to learn about the unique architecture of Chicago and of course, eat some delicious deep dish pizza!

Wendy networked with other dedicated professionals, including the American Institute for Cancer Research and Kate Farms, one of the NYCBS's Cooking With Your Oncologist sponsors.



NEW HIRES

Adam Smith (Lab Aide)

Aidan Zuhoski (Office Associate)

Alan Morris (Radiology Coordinator)

Amanda Rojas (Receptionist)

Ashley Lucido (Lab MA)

Belkis Liburd (Desk/Intake LPN)

Brooke Beekman (CT Technologist)

Casey Rogers (Infusion RN)

Casey Schmogger (Lab MA)

Elizabeth Montgomery
(Patient Communications Operator)

Evan Cressman (PA)

Evelyn Van Den Heuvel (Intake LPN)

Gabriella Fernandez (Intern)

Iris Rojo (LPN Radiation)

Katherine Bazalais (Lab MA)

Lakia Taylor
(Patient Communications Operator)

Laura Schimmenti (LPN)

Linda Lozach (EA)

Madeline Vargas (Receptionist)

Madison Pearson
(Patient Communications Operator)

Monica Aragon (Lab MA)

Meegan Salter (Surgical Coordinator)

Melissa Tavares Ochoa (LPN)

Michael Taub (Corporate Controller)

Mirina Soulopulos (LPN)

Nicole Taggart (Scanning Coordinator)

Rosemarie Londono (Infusion RN)

Samantha Vasquez (Intake LPN)

Starr Raymond
(Patient Communications Operator)

Taylor Matera (Scanning Coordinator)

Victor Lo Junior (Cybersecurity Technician)

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

REGISTERED NURSES (BSN/RNs)

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RADIOLOGIST

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STAFF HEMATOLOGIST/MEDICAL ONCOLOGIST

Brooklyn, NY, at our Brooklyn Hospital Location

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LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE-RESEARCH COORDINATOR

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HEMATOLOGIST/ONCOLOGISTS

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Oncologist/Hematologists

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IMPLEMENTATION SPECIALIST, LPN

Port Jefferson Medical Oncology

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LPN

Riverhead Medical Oncology

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INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY REGISTERED NURSE

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NY Health Forest Hills

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TRIAGE REGISTERED NURSE (Hybrid)

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Huntington

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LAKE SUCCESS MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

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Setauket Radiation Oncology

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Ronkonkoma Medical Oncology

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OUR PATIENTS & THEIR FAMILIES

Our patients and their families tell the story of conquering cancer like no other. They help us connect, inspire, and empower. If you know a patient or have a family member who would like to make an impact and share their experience with us, please have them contact marketing@nycancer.com.