

# THE SPECIALIST

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someone conquering cancer





# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Hello Friends,

Isn't it amazing how fast the time goes by during the holiday season? If there ever was a verb to summarize it, most certainly, it would be "to do." The consequence of all this "doing" is the loss of time that we treasure and crave most: tranquility, peace, and joy.

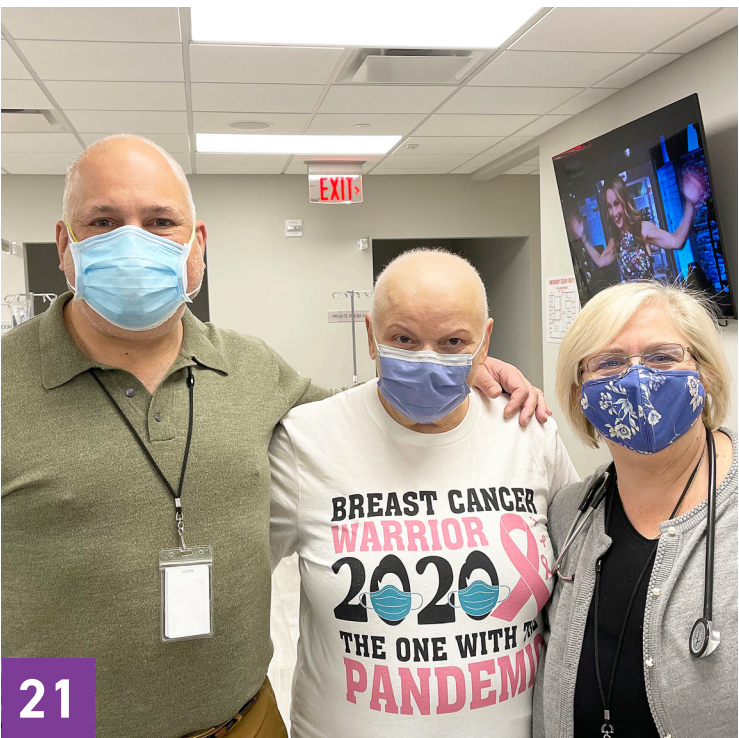

This year has reminded us to pause and reflect on the most important things around us. Canceled plans and missing family and friends, has added layers of frustration and grief. But, regardless if you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, the winter solstice, or simply having made it through another year, this is the ideal time to nurture and strengthen your spiritual side and connect to something greater.

The true spirit of the holiday is very simple: loving others. There is no greater present than the gift of time. Expressing thanks to the people who make your life easier, happier, and healthier is a gift you give not only to them but to you—and your spirit.

My wish is that you can still feel the magic of the holidays. For your tireless efforts, kindness, and compassion is what makes our family here at NYCBS so special and touches the lives of our patients every single day.

Happy holidays and best wishes for a most prosperous 2021!

Cheers,  
Dr. Vacirca



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# Nutrition Update

**We enter the holiday season expecting to eat unhealthy foods and potentially gain weight.**

*Let's be clear, that can be true; however, by changing the way you prepare some seasonal faves, there are also opportunities to bring delicious food to your table while also boosting your nutrition.*

By focusing on healthy substitutes and/or smaller portions, we don't have to eliminate our favorite dishes. A few healthy changes to traditional recipes or smaller amounts of an unaltered recipe can lead to healthier seasonal options.

Many holiday foods are laden with sugar, fat, and sodium for taste, but a few changes will make for healthier recipes without sacrificing taste. Try to be mindful and plan ahead to come up with some creative twists to your holiday staples. It can't hurt to experiment your alterations or new recipes in advance.

## Here are some ideas and tips to get you started:

- Use fruits such as apples, pears and dates as additions to dishes to sweeten them naturally, such as sweet potato, squash, and grains, as they add a natural sweetness. Try them in mashed sweet potatoes, roasted vegetables (e.g., squash,) or grains.
- Use herbs and spices as flavor boosters - 'Tis the season to season! The spicy, rich, earthy, tangy, sweet and savory flavors to enhance or tweak food taste. Besides contributing to flavor and color, herbs and spices offer possible health benefits since they contain phytochemicals.
- Swap a heart-healthy oil such as olive, canola, and soybean or avocado puree for butter in savory or sweet recipes.

- Swap mashed fruit puree such as prune, banana and applesauce for 50% of the butter or oil to lower the fat and calories and add a more healthful component when baking. Try cocoa nibs instead of chocolate chips.
- Cut the amount of salt in a recipe. You can reduce by at least 50% without significantly affecting the taste, especially if you are using herbs and spices.
- Add fiber to recipes and baked goods; grind oats and use as breadcrumbs, use whole wheat breadcrumbs instead of regular, replace 1/4 - 1/2 cup ground flaxseed in recipes calling for 2 or more cups of flour, substitute 1 cup rolled oats or 1 1/2 cups oat flour for 1 cup all-purpose flour, swap whole grains such as brown rice for white rice, bulgur and barley

for refined grains and add lentils, roasted mushrooms or toasted nuts recipes to enhance nutrition.

- Use Greek yogurt as a dip base; add fresh dill (or dried) and a pinch of sea salt. Assemble holiday-colored veggies such as red and green bell peppers, tomatoes, celery, jicama, etc. on a skewer in individual see-through cups with a scoop of dip at the bottom. Not only will this give you a protein-packed delicious appetizer, the visual appeal will enhance the feeling of festivity.
- "Fry up" latkes on a griddle instead of the traditional frying method and serve with unsweetened applesauce. Not only will it save you fat and calories, it will cut down on cooking and clean up time. Two secrets to making good-tasting latkes are to squeeze as much water out of the potatoes

as possible and add a dash of my secret ingredient (aka white pepper) to kick it up a notch.

- Go for a pretty mocktail mixer instead of the cocktail. Use 1/4 juice such as cranberry or grape) and 3/4 sparkling water or use a 50/50 mix of coconut water and sparkling water and add fruit, vegetables, herbs, and spices such as clementines, pomegranate arils, frozen berries, mint, cucumber, cinnamon, star anise, or whatever else comes to mind.

**Note:** If you want to use artificial sweeteners, pick a recipe that has the sweetener in the ingredient list, this way you will know the recipe was already adapted and accounts for how the volume and structure of the end product will be affected. Small changes make a big difference during the holidays. Take

advantage of all the season has to offer and savor every bite. Although the holidays may look a bit different this year, food is the universal language that brings people together. Even if your gathering is smaller than usual, surrounding yourselves with loved ones and healthy food goes a long way in nourishing your body and soul. Most importantly, enjoy every second and be kind to yourself when you indulge!



# Gratitude AND GRACE

BEING THANKFUL DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Each day is a gift from God. I am thankful for my wonderful family and my fantastic Dr's. At NYCBS Dr. Dacosta and Dr. Bill and my lovely nutritionist Brianna. They are blessings to me thanking **GOD AND DR DACOSTA FOR HEALING MY BREAST CANCER LOVE AND GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU!**

I am grateful for Dr. DaCosta, and the great staff for giving me a second chance at life! Thank You.

I am thankful for my family and, being a patient of Dr. J.

I am grateful for my son & brother. Also the wonderful medical staff at NYCBS.

During times like these, it's important to reflect on what is truly important. Whether it's friends, family, or wholesome Thanksgiving turkey, our patients and staff shared. See what they said!

As gray hairs settle in for life's journey and old sport injuries make themselves known, I find myself more and more grateful of things, I once took for granted. I am thankful for my wife and two boys who I am so very proud of. My family, pets, and all the friends who have lined my life with laughter and support.

- Ben Owens



# HOPE

## FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season brings mixed feelings of joy and sadness. For patients or caregivers dealing with a cancer diagnosis or a chronic illness, feelings may be magnified. This time of the year can be overwhelming for our patients, especially when surrounded by others planning and celebrating the holiday season. No matter what you celebrate, the focus is centered around the spirit of family and friends.

Our patients who are nearing the end of life are especially vulnerable at this time of year. For caregivers, it is difficult to witness their loved ones who are ill, especially during a time that is typically reserved for being filled with holiday cheer. **Focus on spending quality time together, cherish those moments with your loved ones, create memories that will bring smiles and laughter in years to come, and most importantly, do not stress over what is supposed to be after a beautiful time together.**

Palliative care is centered around helping patients manage distressing or troubling symptoms to improve overall quality of life, decrease symptom burden, and alleviate stress.

**So how can we help our patients and families cope during the holiday season?**

**We can remind them of some of these tips:**

- Focusing on creating memories will bring joy and laughter to both patients and caregivers.
- Forgive yourself, and give yourself permission to do things differently, normal routines can be modified
- Be accepting of help if it is offered or know it is ok to ask loved ones for help if you need it
- Do not put too many expectations on yourself. Pace yourself and set limits
- Do something that makes you feel good
- Create a scrapbook of memories
- Write a journal about life experiences
- Capture photographs or videos
- Watch a holiday movie, have your favorite warm drink
- Always have hope, hope of a good day or even a good moment in the light of illness

*The true meaning of the holidays are not the gifts we receive or the objects we obtain, it is the emotion we remember most. The scents, the sights, and the memories. Remember that spending time together is the most precious gift of all. Make the most of the time you have by creating memories that will last a lifetime and remind our patients that we at NYCBS will always be a resource of support and strength not only throughout the holiday season but all year long!*





# HOW OUR PHYSICIANS CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS

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**Dr. Bartosz Walczyszyn**

celebrates the Polish tradition of having a 12 dish supper and dessert on Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve dinner, also known as Wigilia, starts when the first star appears in the sky. Nothing is to be eaten until all members of the family have broken the Christmas wafers (opłatek) together and exchanged wishes for good health and prosperity.

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**Dr. Steven Gruenstein**

spends the holidays with family and friends.

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**Dr. Avi Retter**

celebrates Hanukkah with his family by lighting one candle per day, exchanging gifts for eight days, and appreciating all that they have.

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**Dr. Steve Montana**

is Italian and his wife is Colombian. The Montana household combines their cultures with an Italian meal and a Colombian meal. They indulge in empanadas as part of their appetizers and enjoy struffoli, also known as honey balls, for dessert.

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**Dr. Fabio Volterra**

usually spends the holiday with a large gathering of loved ones. However, this year will be just his family. The Volterra family celebrates with the Feast of the Seven Fishes on Christmas Eve.



# The Holiday Gift Giving Guide For Cancer Patients That Anyone Would Love

*The season of giving is upon us. If you're searching for a gift for someone battling cancer, we've got you covered! We know it can be challenging this time of year to find the right gift, especially for someone you care about who is undergoing treatment. In our family, you're not alone, so we put together a list of ideas to make your shopping a bit more joyful. These gifts are sure to bring smiles and holiday cheer.*

**HEPA Filter Air Purifier with a No-Ozone UV Light:** Patients undergoing chemotherapy treatments have weakened immune systems. A quality HEPA air purifier / HEPA air cleaner with a non-ozone producing (UV) ultraviolet light system will remove viruses, bacteria, mold, and fungi pathogens from the air that could cause infection.

**Cool Air Humidifier:** Xerostomia (dry mouth)/thick saliva is a side effect of some chemotherapies- using a cool-mist humidifier at home will help moisten the air.

**Cozy Throw Blankets:** Give a warm hug that's COVID safe. Throw blankets will not only keep your loved ones warm during the long days of winter but will also cozy-up their living space. They also make great gifts to bring to treatment. Infusion centers are always cold, and while they do have blankets for patients, it's nice to have your own. You can even have them personalized with pictures.

**Portable, handheld gaming devices:** A portable, handheld gaming device is a great way to pass the time for the gamer in your life who's sidelined by treatment or surgery. Playing video games serve as a distraction and may exercise their brain and help them combat confusion, memory loss, and other treatment-related side effects. The more immersive the game, the better.

**Books & Fancy Pens/Pencils & Highlighters:** Snuggling up with a good book provides comfort, inspiration, and support. Novels, adult coloring books, journals, planners, and inspirational books are all great ideas. Reading and writing serve as therapeutic tools, while a planner can help them map out a schedule and their goals for the week, in addition to writing down any medical appointments or reminders.

**Cookbooks:** Can help patients navigate their dietary needs and create wholesome meals at home they will love. Our nutritionist loves Holly Clegg's Eating Well Through Cancer - The recipes are easy to follow and the book offers some good tips (side effect specific) as well.

**8 Pocket Expanding Document File Folders Organizer:** This is a great gift to give to someone for their first appointment at NYCBS. He/She will meet with multiple practitioners (Doctor, Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Unit Coordinator, Nutritionist, Social Worker, etc.) and get a lot of information. This will help someone organize all pertinent materials (handouts, pamphlets, etc.) and feel less overwhelmed.

**Assorted flavors of anti-nausea lozenges** (green tea with lemon, ginger, banana).

Nausea and vomiting are some of the worst of many horrible chemo side effects. Queasy Drops or Tummy Drops are good to have on hand should a wave of nausea overtake them. Keep in mind that these should be considered in addition to and not instead of prescription antiemetic (antinausea) medication for anyone experiencing these chemo-induced side effects.

**High-quality Blender:** Sometimes, cancer patients just won't feel like eating. A blender can help prepare simple, delicious smoothies, so they never forgo nourishment. Any type is fine - whether it's a Vitamix or a single-serving Ninja Bullet.

Nutrition impact symptoms such as decreased appetite, early satiety, taste changes, amongst others, can prevent cancer patients from getting all the calories, protein, and other nutrients they need during treatment. Many patients have an easier time drinking their calories - smoothies are a great way to help optimize nutrition and can be custom-made to each person's preference (milkshake, juice) and nutrient needs.

**Indoor vegetable or herb plants:** With a cancer diagnosis, one loses a sense of control; growing a plant will help one gain back some sense of control by being the nurturer. And then you can share and eat the fruits of your labor.

## A Basket of Kitchen Gadgets:

- Grippers (especially helpful if a patient has neuropathy).
- Gloves (with grips) - patients on chemotherapy treatment Oxaliplatin have to be cautious and avoid anything cold.
- Nice set of oven mitts - with grippers as well.
- Electric can opener - helpful if the patient has decreased hand strength.
- Food thermometer is a small, handy gadget that tests the doneness of meat, poultry, and fish so you don't have to cut into the food! Food safety precautions are important for everyone, but even more so for cancer patients who are likely to be immunocompromised.

**Glass meal prep storage containers** in various sizes. Fatigue is a common symptom of cancer treatments. Make-ahead meals to have tasty grab-and-go options in the refrigerator or freezer helps. See-through containers serve as a visual reminder of what foods you have close at hand.

**Cute “bag or cooler bag”** to pack drinks and snacks in for chemo days.

**32oz insulated water bottle:** Make daily water intake simple and cute. Insulated water bottles are one of those trends that are totally worth it!! They keep beverages at a consistent temperature and are completely durable. Many cancer patients run the risk of dehydration; having a visual around serves as a reminder to drink.

**Small, handheld weights (e.g., 2, 3, or 4 pounds) and stretch bands** can help with in-home strength-training. It is imperative to maintain lean muscle mass during cancer treatment. It helps with immune function, ability to tolerate treatment, overall quality of life, etc.

**Hat, Scarf, or Compression Socks:** These can all be super stylish and help patients feel more comfortable. Compression socks will also help with leg swelling.

**Gift cards:** Think food delivery, hair salon, grocery services, rideshare apps, like uber—options that can ease the patient's burden. Traveling to and from home for cancer treatments can be time-consuming and tiring for both the patient and caregiver. A nice idea for a group of people looking to chip in - A “meal service delivery” for a certain amount of time (e.g., duration of treatment) or, a gift card to their favorite restaurant can take away the burden of having to grocery shop and cook.

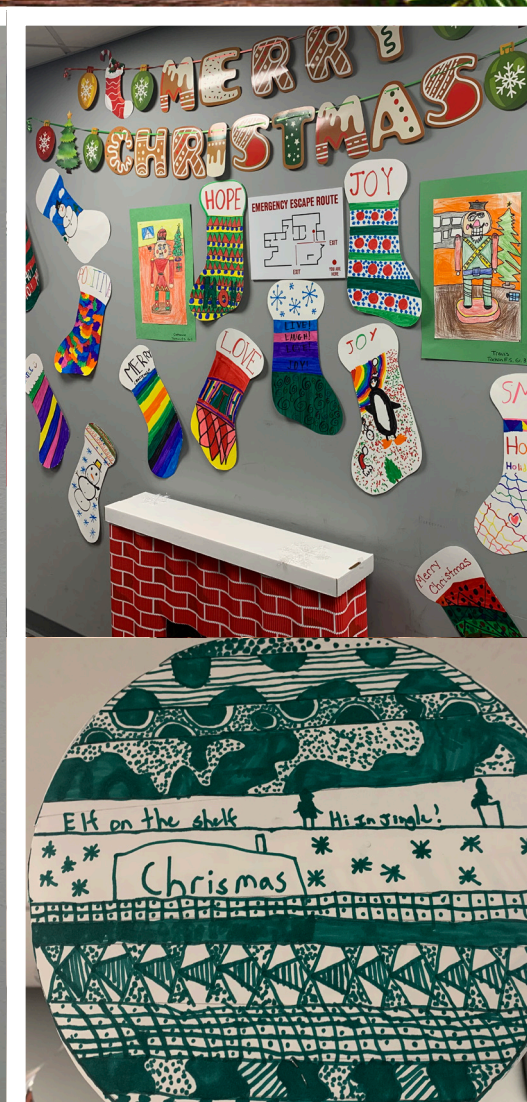
**Firewood:** If they have a fireplace or fire pit, firewood is a great gift to warm up their body and soul.

**Being present:** What better gift than the gift of time. Sometimes all a patient needs is someone to listen and offer advice or tell them what to do or how to do it.



# Holiday DECORATIONS

Please send your holiday photos to [marketing@nycancer.com](mailto:marketing@nycancer.com)





# The Bulletin Board

## Social Work

"In addition to the growing numbers of medical Marijuana patients, I have also seen a huge increase in the need for Handicap Applications. To date, I have helped at least 83 patients who would not have applied for this themselves. This benefits the doctors at the site I work at because it takes the stress off them to fill out the form. I definitely believe that this is a good achievement and is a huge benefit to both our patients and doctors!"

- Anthony Bellomo, LMSW

## Queens Location Added

### Astoria new space

The new Astoria office features numerous amenities that were not available at the previous Astoria location. The expanded area allows us to provide patients with consultations, offers infusion services, and on-site laboratory staff. Dr. Daniel Benasher has joined Dr. Triantafillos Fillos in seeing patients at the new location.

## IT Department

*We are excited to announce a new employee has joined our ever growing team of hard working IT Personel.*

### Jorge Segura

*Jorge will be working in ALL of our city locations.*

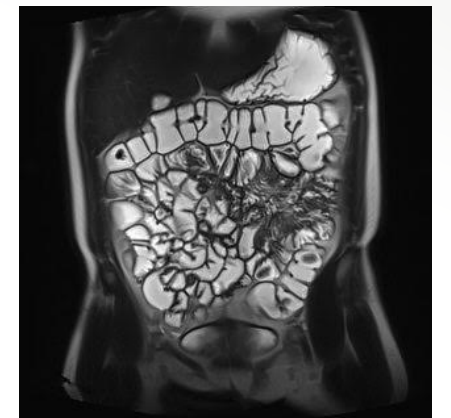


## MR Enterography Studies

MR enterography is a special type of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) performed with a contrast material to produce detailed images of the small intestine.

### Physicians use MR enterography to identify and locate:

- the presence of and complications from Crohn's disease and other inflammatory bowel diseases
- inflammation
- bleeding sources and vascular abnormalities
- tumors
- abscesses and fistulas
- bowel obstructions



## CT Chest Follow-up for Lung Nodules

If a lung nodule is detected on a patient's CT Chest imaging it is important to follow-up.

- Lung nodules  
*small masses of tissue in the lung are quite common.*
- They appear as round, white shadows on a CT scan.
- Lung nodules can be cancerous, however most are benign.
- It is important to track lung nodules for changes in size, shape or appearance.
- It is very helpful to compare the current CT scan with any scans done previously.





# Employee of the Month



*Congratulations to Colleen Finnerty, our  
Employee of the Month!*

## QUOTE of the MONTH

"Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous than absolutely boring."

– Marilyn Monroe

# Movin' Up

Colleagues climbing high

## Chronic Care Management

*We are excited to announce new promotions within the CCM department!*

### Anmol Jaswal

promoted from new patient coordinator to ...*Hospital Coordinator*

### Caroline Roman

promoted from Call Center to...*New Patient Coordinator*

### Jessica Guiffre

promoted from Call Center to...*New Patient Coordinator*

### Aysha Davis

promoted from Call Center to...*Patient Coordinator*

## Queens Locations

*Now have a new Head Nurse!*

### Meghan McCarthy, RN

promoted to...*Head Nurse, Queens Locations*

## YEARS OF SERVICE

In November

RIZZO, SUSAN	39
HENRY, HELEN	37
MCLAUGHLIN, KAREN	29
YOUNGS, DIANA	16

## REVIEW OF THE MONTH

I love this place, they make everything easy and Dr. Tarik Elrafei is the best doctor ever!

- Yasmein Jhury





# NYCBS Laboratory

Testing done for a better future



## Education Corner: Chemistry spotlight

**What is chemistry and how does this help the overall comprehensive care to our patients:**

The function of our Chemistry Department is to perform both quantitative and qualitative analysis, often using body fluids such as blood, urine, serum, plasma as well as others. These analyses or tests are routinely ordered by your clinician to determine your general health status. Often these tests are checking the minerals, enzymes, and markers used to monitor your heart, muscles, and vital organs. Chemistry Laboratory Scientists provide your Clinician with the many laboratory test results that are used for your Diagnosis, treatment, and well being.

## What test do we offer?

We offer over 70 diagnostic tests, which fall into several different categories:

**Clinical Chemistry**, for example: Glucose, Cholesterol, Sodium, Potassium, Chloride, Calcium, Bilirubins, CK, and Serum Protein Electrophoresis, as well as 24 Hour Urine and Random Urine collections for testing.

**Diagnostic Immunology/General Serology**, for example: Immunoglobulins, Rheumatoid Factors, SARS CoVID and Hepatitis.

**Oncology Soluble Tumor Markers**, for example: Alpha FetoProtein, CA15.3, CEA, Free & Total PSA, and CA19-9.

**Endocrinology**, for example: hCG, Progesterone, Testosterone, Estradiol, Vitamin B12, Vitamin D, TSH, T3 Uptake, Thyroxine, and T3 Total.

## What machines we run:

The Chemistry Department utilizes primarily the Roche (Hitachi) Cobas 6000 and 8000, the Helena Laboratories SPIFE Touch and ESH, and the Menarini Silicon Biosystems Circulating Tumor Cells Instruments.

## Lab staff shine:

Elizabeth Pena Graduated with her master's degree in healthcare administration

Desmond Graham Graduated with his master's degree in healthcare administration

# CHEMO FINITO



*We are thrilled to share that one of our breast cancer warriors at New Jersey Cancer & Blood Specialists completed her final chemotherapy treatment. Dr. Condemi and his staff celebrated in the office with balloons and cake. "Chemo Finito!"*



# November New Hires



<b>Alyssa La Starza</b> (Receptionist)	<b>Emily Bond</b> (Call Center)
<b>Amanda Feeney</b> (Patient Communication Operator)	<b>Emily Oquendo</b> (Receptionist)
<b>Andrea Rattray</b> (Receptionist)	<b>Gabriella Selini</b> (Chemotherapy Technician)
<b>Anna Castillo</b> (CCM MA)	<b>Gianna Bove</b> (Lab MA)
<b>Annamarie Oliveri</b> (Lab Assistant)	<b>Jaysa Morales</b> (LPN)
<b>Ashley Blanchfield</b> (CCM Medical Assistant)	<b>Jennifer Berrios</b> (RN)
<b>Betrina Velasco</b> (LPN)	<b>Jessica Thomas</b> (Call Center)
<b>Brianna Traylor</b> (MA)	<b>Jorge Segura</b> (Senior IT Technician)
<b>Brittany Marchese</b> (Lab MA)	<b>Julia Perez</b> (Receptionist)
<b>Cara Vassallo</b> (Radiation Scheduler)	<b>Julissa Gehara</b> (RN)
<b>Cassandra Feldman</b> (Receptionist)	<b>Kathryn DiMaggio</b> (CCM LPN - Tennessee)
<b>Chinella Charlton</b> (Receptionist)	<b>Kathleen Nadler</b> (Eligibility Referral Specialist)
<b>Christopher Guerra</b> (Inventory Control Manager)	<b>Kenya Smith</b> (Receptionist)
<b>Demetrios Pentheros</b> (Maintenance Associate)	<b>Kerri-Ann Filippone</b> (Infusion LPN)

<b>Kirsy Fitch</b> (Lab MA)
<b>Kristin Regina</b> (LPN)
<b>Lala Olivia</b> (RN)
<b>Lenore Zhao</b> (Physical Therapy Aide)
<b>Lindsay Walden</b> (Patient Communication Operator)
<b>Mariel Cinque</b> (CCM Medical Assistant Tennessee)
<b>Monique James</b> (Lab MA)
<b>Nicole Buck</b> (Receptionist)
<b>NiQuasia Owens</b> (Lab)
<b>Pamela Dela Cruz</b> (RN)
<b>Patricia Campbell</b> (Lab MA)
<b>Samantha Wood</b> (Patient Communication Operator)
<b>Skylar Ramoska</b> (Patient Communication Operator)
<b>Stephanie Rivera</b> (Call Center)

# Open Positions



**Medical Assistants**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**CAT SCAN (ct) technologist**  
Port Jefferson Station Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Ultrasound technician With Vascular Certification**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Nurse Practitioners (NP) / Physician's Assistants (PA)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Medical Front Desk Receptionist**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Registered Nurses (BSN/RN's)**  
Contact: Julia Harwood  
jharwood@nycancer.com

**Research Coordinator**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Medical Laboratory Technologist PM Shift**  
Contact: Andrea Kinstler  
akinster@nycancer.com

**PET/CT Scanner**  
(Full Time/Part Time/Per Diem)  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Flow Technician**  
Port Jefferson Station  
Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Implementation Specialist**  
Port Jefferson Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Front Office Quality Lead/Trainer- Western Region**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Development and Training Manager Eastern / Western Region**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

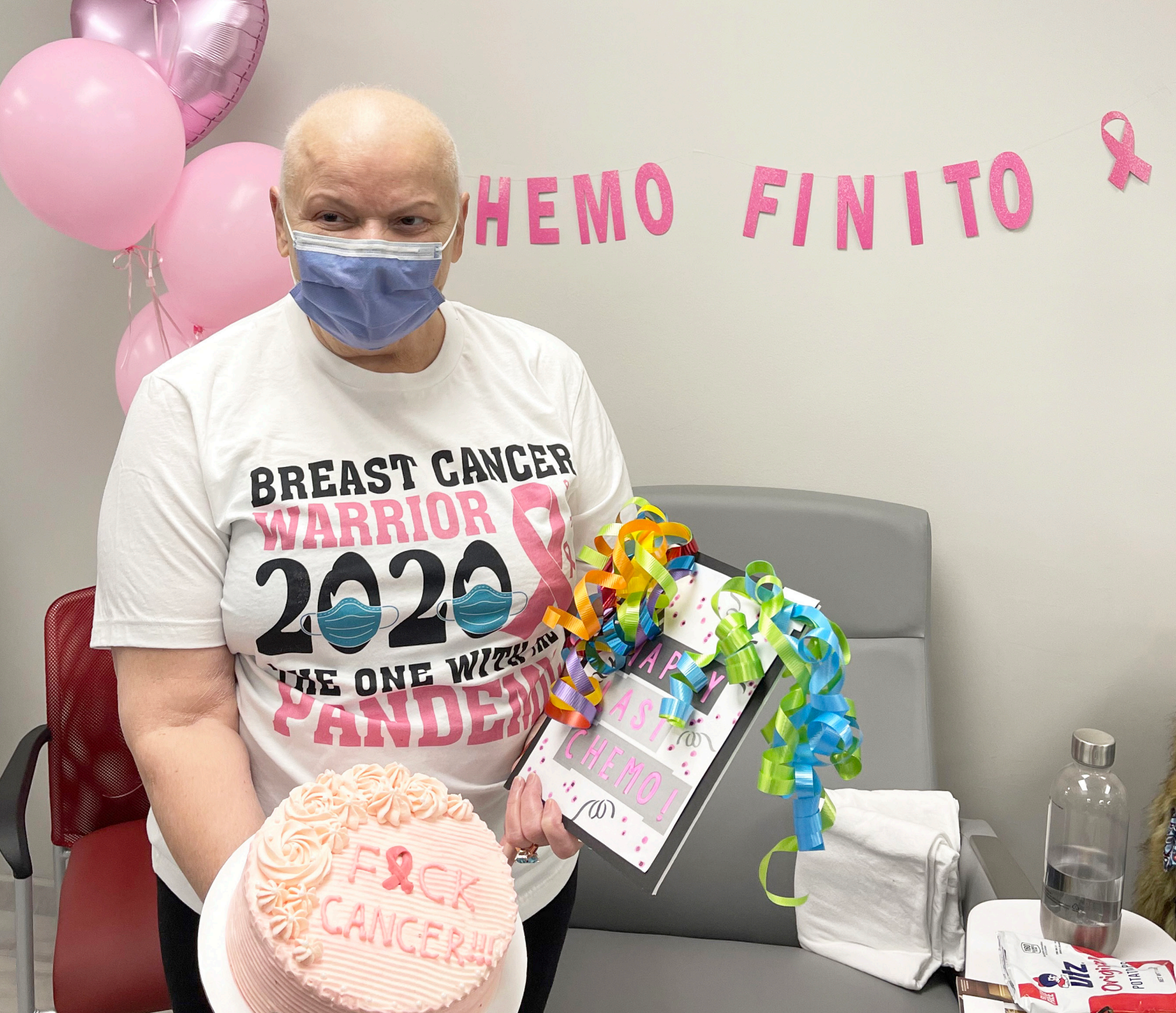
**Nurse Practitioner**  
Contact: Diana Youngs  
dyoungs@nycancer.com

**Oncologist/Hematologists**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com

**Head Nurse, RN/BSN**  
Contact: Julia Harwood  
jharwood@nycancer.com

**Hematologist/Oncologist (Greek Speaking)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
rnicoletti@nycancer.com





# 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](mailto:marketing@nycancer.com).