

OFFICE

 **NEW YORK CANCER & BLOOD SPECIALISTS**

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2023

THE SPECIALIST



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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

My Friends,

November is a time of reflection and gratitude when we focus on being thankful. Did you know that people who are regularly thankful are also healthier? An “attitude of gratitude” can provide many health benefits.

At New York Cancer & Blood Specialists, we are thankful for you—our patients, families, partners, neighbors, and community. You are the center of our mission and the driving force behind our dedication to providing world-class cancer care, close to home.

In this issue of *The Specialist*, we celebrate our Processing Lab Supervisor’s 25 years of service and pay tribute to the retirement of Dr. William LiPera, a beloved physician who has contributed immensely to our practice. His legacy is a testament to our commitment to remarkable patient care.

You’ll find heartwarming messages from our staff about what they are thankful for and delicious and healthy fall side dish recipes approved by our Registered Dietitian Nutritionists to complement your Thanksgiving table.

Since November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month, you’ll learn about the risk factors, symptoms, and screenings available to detect lung cancer before it develops. Our spotlight on mental health at every age and stage reminds us that well-being goes beyond physical health, and good mental health is essential for a fulfilling life. Just ask Andrea, whose love for cooking has fed the hearts and stomachs of others throughout her cancer diagnosis.

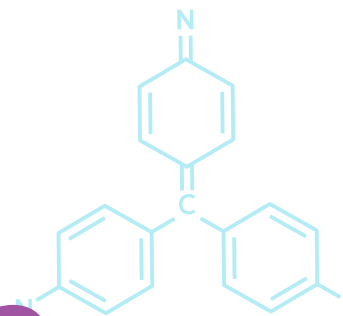
Our patients are an amazing part of our family, and we are truly grateful for that.

Happy Thanksgiving!

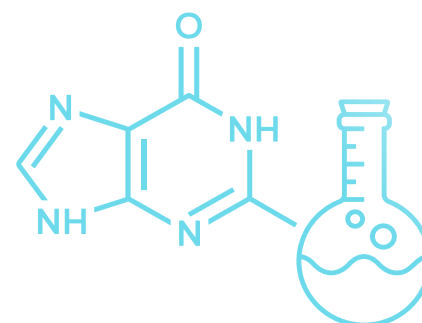
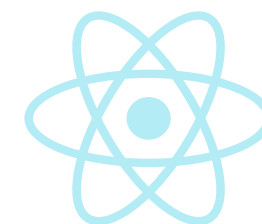
Warm regards,

Dr. V





SECTION 1 Health
ONCOLOGY & MORE



From Colleagues to Companions: A Tribute to Dr. William LiPera

By MaryAnn Fragola, DNP

Each month, I strive to write relevant palliative care articles on the early integration of palliative care, focusing on symptom management, supportive care, and the enhancement of patients' quality of life. Regardless of our discipline, whether it's oncology or support-focused, taking care of our patients remains a fundamental aspect of what we do. However, this month, I wish to shed light on the enduring impact of someone who has been an anchor in my professional journey over the past 23 years.

My relationship with Dr. William LiPera predates my official hiring, dating back to my interview day. Our connection was immediate, even though I was a recent graduate then. He has influenced my career more profoundly than he might ever comprehend. In those early days, when I was a novice, he imparted invaluable lessons about the practice of Hematology/Oncology and the art of patient care. Our shared experiences have left an indelible mark, known only to those who have witnessed the devotion he showed to his patients. Dr. LiPera felt the pain when patients didn't respond to treatment and celebrated their successes when they did. He possessed an unparalleled understanding of

what mattered most to each patient, and our collaboration consistently aimed at their best interests.

Our hours spent examining slides in the lab forged a strong bond, driven by his genuine investment in my education. Those were different times when pen and paper were our primary tools, and he instilled in me the essence of true patient care. While he also introduced me to the rigors of stress, let's focus on the positive aspects of our journey.

Over the years, we worked side by side, developing a synergy that allowed us to seamlessly handle each other's patients and finish each

Dr. LiPera was not just a colleague but a true mentor, dedicating his time to educating me about specific diseases and treatments.

other's sentences. We were the definition of a team. Our extensive time together meant we knew each other's families intimately. We celebrated many milestones, from the birth of my three sons to his children's weddings and the



From Colleagues to Companions: A Tribute to Dr. William LiPera

By MaryAnn Fragola, DNP

(continued)

encouragement, even knowing that the day might come when I would branch off independently. He was the inspiration behind my aspiration to achieve more. I held his practice in the highest regard and considered him my mentor. The day I eventually set out on my own path was an emotional one, and he selflessly let me go (while I spent the whole day in tears).

To Dr. LiPera,

I am deeply honored to have had the privilege of working alongside you and to have learned from you—you shaped my career in oncology. You set the bar high, but your practice taught me compassion, empathy, and made it easy for me to learn. I will forever cherish the wonderful times we spent as colleagues and friends, the countless stories we shared, and the laughter and tears that marked our years together. I feel blessed to have experienced this with you as both a mentor and a true friend.

Your commitment to your patients and the field of oncology as a whole will be eternally remembered through the countless lives you've touched. As you embark on a well-deserved new chapter in your life, I dedicate this to you—a true legend, an expert in your field, a mentor, and a true friend. My wish for you is simple: health, happiness, joy in spending time with family and friends, and please, let's not forget, the satisfaction of no more inbox!!!!

**NYCBS will not be the same. I will miss you dearly in the office.
However, I know we will continue to be friends and family.**



The Connection Between Cancer and Diabetes

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

There is growing evidence of a significant link between cancer and diabetes. It is increasingly common for both diseases to be diagnosed within the same patient, as they share overlapping risk factors and etiological pathways. Diabetes increases the risk of developing cancer, and cancer, in turn, increases the risk of developing diabetes.

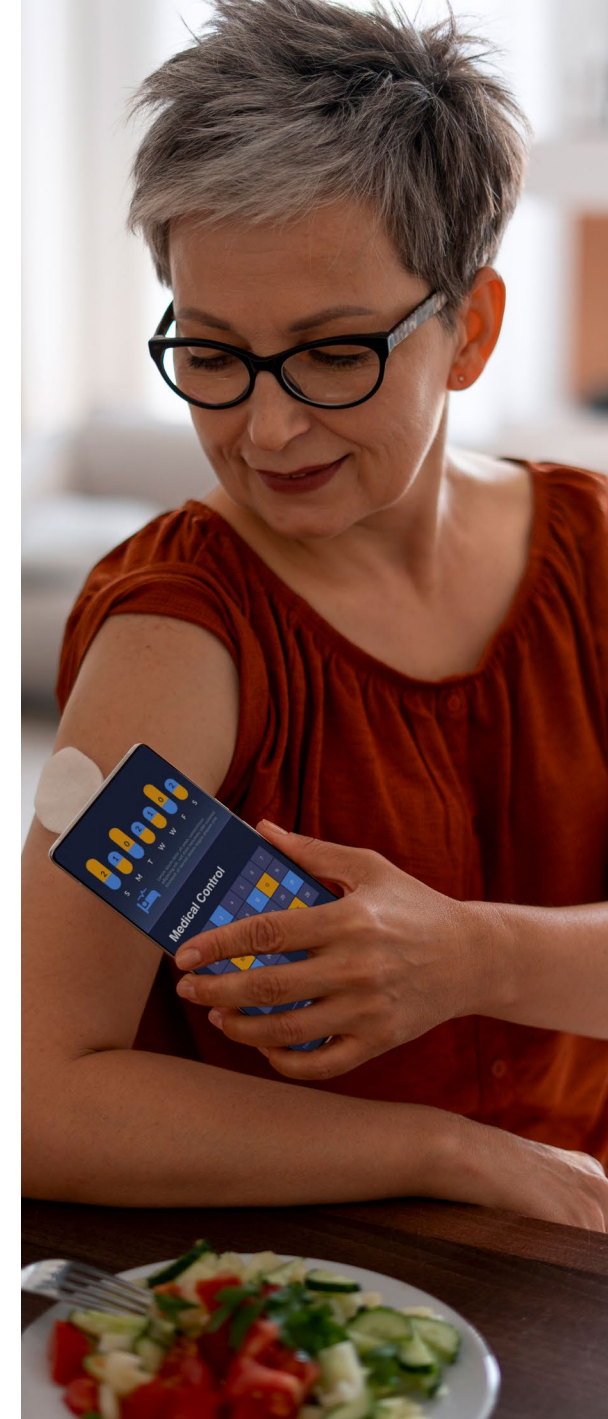
Specifically, individuals with type 1 diabetes have an increased risk of stomach, liver, kidney, pancreatic, and endometrial cancers, while their risk of breast and prostate cancers is decreased. For those with prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, the risk of liver, pancreas, and endometrial cancers is twice as high, and the risk of colorectal, breast, and bladder cancers is 1.2-1.5 times higher. However, the risk of prostate cancer is lower.

Despite its significance, the link between cancer and diabetes remains an under-discussed topic in clinical practice. Studies have even suggested that just a few days of hyperglycemia can harm the immune system. Having diabetes prior to a cancer diagnosis further complicates cancer treatment, and certain cancer treatments themselves can

induce diabetes. It is worth noting that in cases of treatment-induced diabetes (or steroid diabetes), not all patients were predisposed to the disease.

We commend NYCBS for its leadership in cancer care and efforts to address this critical area. My fellow RDN colleagues and I have diligently pursued the CDCES (Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist) board certification to better serve our patients and multidisciplinary teams.

Fortunately, advances in cancer treatments have resulted in increased cancer survivorship. However, with higher rates of survivorship come additional health concerns, such as prediabetes and



diabetes. Cancer survivors are at risk of experiencing multiple long-term and late-term side effects, some of which may begin during treatment.

One of the key elements in managing the link between cancer and diabetes is understanding the negative effects of certain treatments on diabetes and other endocrine issues. Treatments such as antineoplastic agents,

glucocorticoids, hormone-based therapies, and radiation have been associated with detrimental effects on the development and management of diabetes. The possible mechanisms for this direct link include hyperinsulinemia, hyperglycemia, and inflammation.

Hyperinsulinemia occurs when the body produces excessive amounts of insulin to compensate for elevated blood glucose levels. Chemotherapy and other cancer treatments can suppress immune function, which, when combined with hyperglycemia, further compromises the immune system and increases the risk of infections, such as bacterial and fungal infections. Additionally, factors such as inactivity, emotional stress, and excess



work closely with healthcare professionals, including RDNs, to develop an individualized plan that supports optimal health and well-being.

Sometimes, patients undergoing cancer treatment and post-treatment experience weight gain. This weight gain tends to be in the form of central adiposity, or fat mass, rather than lean body mass. Unfortunately, cancer and its treatment can cause several metabolic changes, including hormone level decreases that lead to insulin resistance, as well as increased estrogen levels and other factors that contribute to this weight gain.

Another factor to consider is that cancer patients may not feel well during treatment, resulting in suboptimal oral intake. In such cases, the "ideal healthy eating pattern" may need to be adjusted to a more liberalized diet that meets the patient's protein and energy needs and accommodates their taste preferences. Since patients are at different stages of disease during treatment, they may experience varying nutritional impact symptoms and side effects, which can affect food cravings, energy levels, and overall mood.

Medical nutrition therapy (MNT) is an essential intervention to address this concern, and it may include the following strategies:

weight (overweight or obesity) contribute significantly to hyperglycemia. Excess weight can lead to increased insulin levels, higher glucose levels, and potentially support tumor growth.

As with many other diseases and chronic conditions, there are modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors associated with cancer and diabetes. While we cannot control factors such as age and ethnicity, we can make proactive choices regarding our diet, weight management, physical activity levels, alcohol consumption, and smoking habits to prevent or slow down the progression of these conditions.

As Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs), we collaborate with our patients to develop realistic and achievable goals for healthy eating and lifestyle changes. Our aim is to improve clinical parameters, enhance overall health, and optimize body composition by promoting the increase of lean mass and reducing fat mass.

Addressing the link between cancer and diabetes requires a comprehensive approach that combines medical intervention, dietary modifications, and lifestyle changes. It is crucial to

- Promoting healthy food choices and patterns, such as plant-based, Mediterranean, or DASH diets.
- Limiting refined carbohydrates in the diet.
- Adjusting calorie, sugar, and fat intake to meet individual needs.
- Determining healthy macronutrient ratios to manage blood sugar.
- Promoting meal consistency by consuming meals and snacks at regular times each day.
- Pairing protein with carbohydrate foods to stabilize blood sugar levels.
- Educating on healthy portion sizes and appropriate portion control.
- Encouraging physical activity and discouraging sedentary behavior.
- Encouraging short brisk walks after meals to aid digestion and insulin sensitivity.
- Increasing fiber intake through whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables.
- Decreasing red meat consumption and exploring alternative protein sources.
- Urging smoking cessation, as smoking has negative effects on overall health.

While some of these recommendations may seem general, registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) help establish specific goals tailored to an individual's unique needs, considering their medical conditions, comorbidities, cultural preferences, and more. The goal is to support patients in implementing these strategies effectively.



November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month

As the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, it's important to not only spread awareness around the disease but to help shed light on how to reduce your risks of developing it.

Though not all factors are controllable, everyone must know their risk factors and screening options to help reduce the death rate and increase the chance of prevention, early detection, and hopefully, one day, a cure.

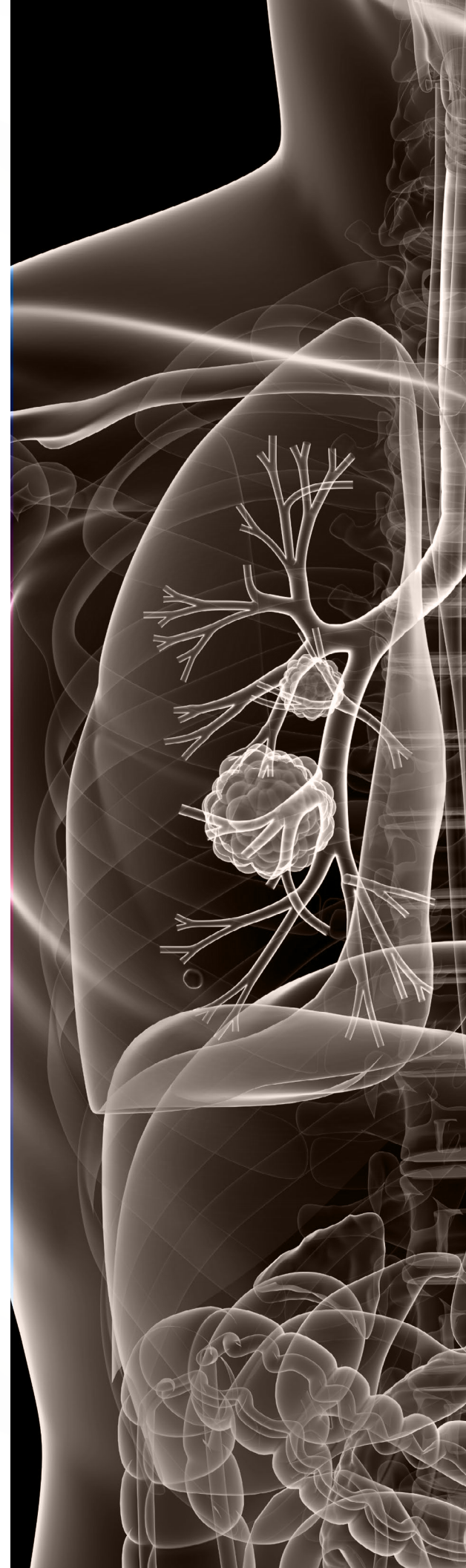
Here's What Everyone Should Know When it Comes to Lung Cancer.

Common Risk Factors for Lung Cancers

Lung cancer is identified by two general types: small cell lung cancer and non-small cell lung cancer. With non-small cell lung cancer being an umbrella term for various lung cancers, small cell lung cancer is less common and almost always found in heavy smokers. Though it's commonly known that one of the most significant risk factors for lung cancer is smoking, being exposed to secondhand smoke can also increase your risks.

Some other risk factors to consider include:

- Previous radiation therapy (especially to the chest)
- Exposure to radon gas, asbestos, or other carcinogens
- A family history of lung cancer



Avoid smoking to reduce your risks; if you smoke, consider stopping. Avoid secondhand smoke exposure by asking those you live or work with to quit or only smoke outdoors. You might also look into testing your home for radon and use extra precautions if you work in an industry exposed to carcinogens. A healthy diet and regular exercise have been known to reduce your risk for lung cancer too.

Symptoms of Lung Cancer

Like most cancers, signs and symptoms are often not present until advanced stages. Some common symptoms may include:

- A sudden, persistent cough that won't subside
- Coughing up blood
- Shortness of breath
- Pains in the chest
- Hoarseness
- Bone pain
- Headache
- Sudden weight loss (without trying)

It's important to talk to your doctor when any of the above symptoms are present so they can further discuss your testing and screening options with you.

Lung Cancer Screenings

To find lung cancer early on, your doctor may recommend a lung cancer screening, known as a low-dose computed tomography or low-dose CT scan or LDCT. Often, screenings are recommended only to those at high risk for lung cancer, as some risks — such as a false-positive, overdiagnosis, and radiation exposure — can all occur from the screening.

Your pack-year (meaning smoking one pack of cigarettes per day for a year), how long you've smoked or been a nonsmoker, and your age will all determine your eligibility for screening. Currently, screening is not recommended for individuals over the age of 81 or those who have not smoked for over 15 years. If you think you're a good candidate for screenings, speak with your doctor on how and when you can begin the process.

Good Mental Health at Every Stage

At every stage of life, mental health is a critical component that encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being. As individuals age, they often encounter life changes that can impact their mental health, with a cancer diagnosis being one such challenge. Recognizing sources of stress becomes paramount, as persistent feelings of grief and isolation may evolve into mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety. The good news is that effective treatment options are available to help individuals, including older adults, manage their mental health and enhance their overall quality of life. The initial step towards this support involves recognizing signs and seeking professional healthcare assistance.

"Cancer is just one of the challenges experienced by older patients, who must also confront other illnesses, financial instability post-retirement, increased social isolation due to family losses, and additional complexities, including a heightened risk of medication reactions and concurrent health issues," says Jacqueline Schomber, PsyD, Chief Director of Behavioral Health at New York Cancer & Blood Specialists. "Recognizing these unique challenges is vital when making treatment and care decisions."

The Wellness Program at New York Cancer & Blood Specialists is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for our patients, with a particular emphasis on aiding our older patients in adapting to their diagnosis and navigating the challenges of the aging process. We offer a wide array of services, including counseling and emotional

support, either in person or remotely, transportation assistance for appointments, meal-related support, aid with household activities, caregiving resources, financial assistance covering housing, utilities, and cancer care, as well as opportunities for companionship. Our program is designed to provide comprehensive support, enhancing the overall well-being of our patients throughout their cancer journey.

Many factors influence healthy aging. Some of these, such as genetics, are not in our control. Others — like exercise, a healthy diet, going to the doctor regularly, and taking care of our mental health — are within our reach.

To make an appointment, call 1-833-CANCER-9. For more information, visit [nycancer.com](https://www.nycancer.com).



LUNG CANCER Screening Program

Our lung cancer screening program provides low-dose lung CT screening to current and former smokers at high risk of developing lung cancer.

Who We Screen

Through this program, we provide low-dose CT screening for people who:

- Currently, smoke or quit smoking within the past 15 years
- Are between the ages of 40 and 80
- Have smoked an average of one pack per day for at least 20 years or the equivalent (for example, two packs a day for 10 years).

What Increases Risk for Lung Cancer

The most critical risk factor for lung cancer is cigarette smoking. Tobacco use accounts for a majority of all lung cancers. The longer you smoke and the more packs of cigarettes you smoke, the greater your risk of developing cancer.

Other factors that may put you at increased risk for lung cancer include the following:

- Exposure to radon
- Exposure to asbestos
- Significant exposure to second-hand smoke
- Exposure to cancer-causing agents in the environment, especially occupational exposures
- Lung scarring from certain types of pneumonia or a diagnosis of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or Emphysema
- A first-degree relative, such as a parent or sibling, who has had lung cancer

Why Get Screened

- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths.
- Helps to detect cancer early
- Significantly reduces risk
- Identify cancer at an early treatable stage

Scheduling Your Screening

You can schedule your in-person low-dose CT scan, which will take less than five minutes at any of our locations. You need a doctor's prescription to get screened. If you do not have a prescription or a doctor, you can call us to discuss your risk for lung cancer.

For additional information about screening, to schedule an appointment, or to learn more about insurance coverage for screening, please call 833-269-4624.

ADVANCING Clinical Research Diversity

Takeda Pharmaceuticals sponsored an event at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Bay Shore for Dr. Richard Zuniga, a medical oncologist-hematologist and the Medical Chief of Research at New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS), to speak to the Spanish community on the importance of clinical trials. Clinical trials are research studies involving human volunteers to evaluate medical products like medications, vaccines, or devices for safety and effectiveness, especially important in cancer care new treatments.

Ensuring people from diverse backgrounds join clinical trials is key to advancing health equity. Often, people from racial and ethnic minorities and other diverse groups are underrepresented in clinical research. This is a concern because people of different ages, races, and ethnicities may react differently to certain treatments. For example, different genetic makeups vary by race and understanding how treatments affect individuals is key to tailoring specific treatment options.

Clinical trials offer new, cutting-edge treatment options for patients of any age, at any stage of their diagnosis. Clinical trials are not only for relapsed patients or those who are not responding to other treatments. Clinical trials are highly regulated. Patients enrolled in clinical trials are monitored closely by the trial doctor and other members of their medical team. Clinical trials can give you access to the latest cancer treatments, but it can be overwhelming to find and enroll in trials on your own, often leaving you with more questions than answers.

The church decided to merge its morning service and Mass into a single event for the engagement, followed by lunch and Dr. Zuniga's presentation. The gathering attracted a crowd of over 200 individuals, comprising both 80 regular church attendees and others who participated through the Facebook livestream. The attendees had the opportunity to engage in a Q&A session, and a survey conducted afterward revealed that 90% of respondents found the event beneficial. There are upcoming plans for further involvement, aiming to extend these engagements to additional communities and provide education to diverse populations about the significance of clinical trials.

At NYCBS, our Clinical Research Team is an extension of your healthcare team, personally assisting you through every step of the clinical trial process. We thoroughly assess your current and past medical history to determine which trials might fit you. We also help with non-clinical factors that may affect your participation in a trial, such as geographic, financial, or social considerations.

For more information about Research and the clinical studies available, visit nycancer.com.



Dr. Richard Zuniga

NEW YORK CANCER & BLOOD SPECIALISTS Welcomes Dr. Purva Sharma

New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS), one of the nation's leading oncology practices, is proud to announce the addition of board-certified Hematologist-Oncologist **Dr. Purva Sharma**. Dr. Sharma will practice at **12 East 86th Street, Suite 4, New York, NY 10028**.

"Dr. Sharma's commitment to patient-centered care mirrors the core values of NYCBS. We're proud to welcome her to our team," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO of NYCBS.

Dr. Sharma is committed to compassionately providing her patients with the most up-to-date medical information, empowering them to make informed decisions about their medical care. Dr. Sharma treats all types of cancers and hematological conditions. She has a special interest in GU and GI cancers and newly emerging immunotherapy treatments. Dr. Sharma's dedication to her patients is at the forefront of her practice, ensuring that each individual receives the highest quality of care tailored to their unique needs.

"My patients' goals of care are the central philosophy of my practice," said Dr. Sharma.

Dr. Sharma received her MD from Ross University School of Medicine. She completed an Internal Medicine Residency at Memorial Hospital Of Rhode Island.

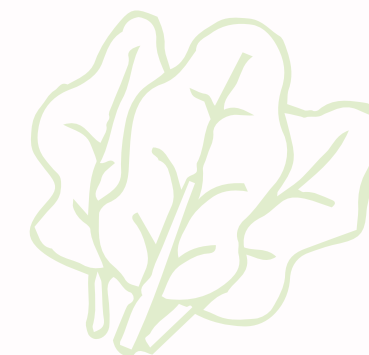


Dr. Sharma completed a Transfusion Medicine/Blood Banking Fellowship at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and completed her Hematology-Oncology Fellowship from the University of Vermont School of Medicine.

"I am excited to join a dynamic and growing group of providers who can offer cutting-edge care in the greater New York area," she said.

**To make an appointment, please call:
212-861-6660.**

**For more information, visit:
nycancer.com**



SECTION 2 Wellness
NUTRITION & MORE



Seasonal Carrots & Pine Nut Pilaf

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

These two delicious and healthy side dishes, prepared by Director of Nutritional Services Wendy Kaplan, are packed with flavorful herbs and spices and feature fall staple vegetables and whole grains. They not only taste amazing but are also rich in vitamins, minerals, and cancer-fighting properties, making them crowd-pleasing standouts at your table. Enjoy the wholesome goodness!

Easy Pine Nut Pilaf:

Ingredients:

- 2 cups hot-cooked brown rice (or quinoa)
- 1 1/2 ounces pine nuts
- 2 ounces spinach leaves, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup diced cooked butternut squash
- 1 Tbsp. Extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)

Instructions:

In a large bowl, place the hot rice.

Add the remaining ingredients and gently toss until the spinach is wilted, ensuring all the ingredients are thoroughly combined.

Seasonal Carrots:

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp. unsalted butter
- 1 Tbsp. maple syrup
- 3/4 tsp. paprika
- 1/4 tsp. coriander
- 1 pound carrots, peeled and sliced 1/8 inch thick (~3 cups)
- 1/4 tsp. Kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper
- 3/4 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped parsley

Instructions:

Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat.

Add maple syrup, paprika, and coriander. Cook and stir for one minute.

Add carrots, salt, pepper, and water. Cover the skillet and bring it to a boil.

Once boiling, reduce the heat and let it simmer for about seven minutes or until the carrots are tender.

Uncover the skillet and continue to simmer briskly, stirring often, for approximately five minutes or until the liquid reduces to around 2 tablespoons.

Sprinkle with parsley.

This festive dish creates a flavorful side to complement any meal. The blend of spices will provide a mild and slightly smoky taste to your dish.

Balancing Blood Glucose Through the Holidays

By Patricia Salvio, RDN, CDN, CNSC

As the holiday season rolls around, we're all faced with treats and feasts at every turn. For individuals managing diabetes, balancing these indulgences can be like a tightrope walk. Here are some savvy tips to help control your blood sugar levels without missing out this holiday Season!

Preparing for the Main Event:

Start Your Day Right: Avoid skipping meals to save room for later. Enjoy a balanced breakfast or snacks earlier in the day to avoid overindulging. Skipping meals can make blood sugar management trickier.

Travel Smart: If you know you will be on the go, prepare in advance with balanced snacks.

During the Feast:

Fruits and Vegetables First: Keep it colorful (i.e., tomatoes, broccoli, carrots). Opt for raw, grilled, or steamed fruits and vegetables over those drenched in creams, gravies, or butter.

Choose Your Carbs Concisely: When assembling your plate, try limiting starchy foods to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate rather than loading up on excessive portions. It can be tempting to load up on mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole, and rolls. Try to enjoy a few spoonfuls each of starchy foods like potatoes, squash and corn.

Drink Smart: Think zero-calorie drinks like water, tea, seltzer, or diet sodas. If you do consume alcohol, do so only in moderation and always with food. Remember, women should have no more than one alcoholic beverage per day, while men can have up to two. Standard drinks reference: 12 oz. regular beer, 5 oz. wine, and 1.5 oz. distilled spirits



Finishing Strong:

Mindful morsels: Enjoy your favorite holiday treats, but practice portion control. Savor every bite, and eat slowly.

Walk it Off: Or dance it off! After the meal, take time to move your body with friends and family. This will not only help with digestion but also help to manage blood sugar levels.

No Self-Critique: If you happen to overindulge, don't be too hard on yourself. Everyone slips up now and then. Just refocus and get back on track with your blood sugar management plan.

Pro-Tips:

Host with the Most: Create a balanced menu from all food groups, which includes lean proteins, fiber-rich starchy foods, veggies, fruits, and low-fat dairy. Utilize healthful cooking methods like baking, broiling, and grilling to avoid excessive fat use.

Guest of Honor: Don't be afraid to pitch in - Offer to bring a delicious and healthful dish that aligns with your nutrition goals for everyone to enjoy. Use these tips to create a game plan and minimize the stress of the holiday season. Joining in the festivities while keeping your blood sugar levels in check. Wishing you a season filled with good health and joy!



SECTION 3 Stories
PATIENT & FAMILY



Never Give Up, Never Surrender



"I have a lot of feeding left to do," says Andrea, 41, a mother of four and a private caterer who honed her culinary skills in her grandmother's kitchen, drawing inspiration from her rich Guyanese heritage—flavors of the Caribbean, infused with a unique food style all her own. But in October 2022, a sudden discovery changed the course of her life



"I felt a lymph node in my armpit," she explains. "One day, a big lump suddenly appeared."

Andrea immediately made an appointment with her primary care physician who referred her for a sonogram and mammogram. The results prompted a biopsy, followed by the shocking news of a breast cancer diagnosis, a disease that Andrea says runs in her father's side of the family.

Scared of the unknown, Andrea sought treatment with New York Cancer & Blood Specialists at St. John's Episcopal Hospital and met oncologist Dr. Joshua Harris.

"Dr. Harris explained the entire process, outlining every step he intended to take," she recalls. "I realized he knew what he was doing and I had the confidence that he was the doctor who would

be there to guide me through this journey."

Andrea underwent 17 rounds of chemotherapy, experiencing symptoms such as nausea, fatigue, and hair loss. She says, "I felt like a boss when I cut my hair."

In September 2023, Andrea underwent a double mastectomy and is currently on the road to healing. With 30 days of preventive radiation treatment on the horizon, she anticipates her return to the company she holds dear once she has made a full recovery

Throughout it all, Andrea always remained optimistic. Even when she was terminated from her employer

of eight years, and no longer had a source of income. "Every time I looked at my children, I'd think to myself, there's no time to give up."

Thanks to Andrea's wonderful husband of 18 years and amazing support system, surrendering was never an option. "Dr. Harris and his team are great. All of the nurses, Nina, Roman and Ray," she says.

Throughout Andrea's entire treatment, she always came in with a smile and rarely complained," says her nurse Nina. "We are so happy to see Andrea restored to the happy, positive, beautiful person that she is. We are so proud of her and all of our patients who are so strong and persevere."

Additionally, the St. John's ICARE Foundation extended a helping hand, providing valuable resources for her children, such as school supplies and gift cards.

"Cancer changes you. It pushed me in the right direction for a lot of things," says Andrea. Now she looks forward to her new normal when she can go on a weekend getaway with her husband and get back to doing what she enjoys most. "I absolutely love cooking. I was born to do that."



SECTION **4** Bulletin
NEWS & UPDATES



The 3rd Annual *Raising Hope Gala*

by the New York Cancer Foundation Raises
Over \$1 Million for Patients in Need

Over \$1 million was raised through the remarkable generosity of attendees at the 3rd Annual Raising Hope Gala, hosted by the New York Cancer Foundation (NYCF), a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing financial assistance to cancer patients in the Greater New York Metro Area. The event, themed "Hope Grows Here," continued the tradition of supporting the Foundation's mission to alleviate the financial burdens experienced by patients undergoing cancer treatment.

"It was a remarkable evening surrounded by fellow advocates, friends, and partners, reminding us of the impact we can create when we stand united," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO of New York Cancer & Blood Specialists and Chairman of the Board, NYCF. "Since its inception, the Foundation has touched the lives of tens of thousands of patients."



The 3rd Annual *Raising Hope Gala*

(continued)

The funds raised will be instrumental in providing financial assistance to cancer patients throughout the Greater New York Metro Area, helping to ease the financial stressors associated with their day-to-day living expenses, including rent/mortgage payments and utility bills.

"It is through the generosity of our attendees—really all of our donors throughout the year—that we are able to help so many patients during their most difficult times. Hope truly grows here!" said Tina Toulon, Executive Director of NYCF.

The Raising Hope Gala also featured several notable guests and moments, including world-renowned photographer Nigel Barker and Art Bodega magazine. A breast cancer survivor and a grant recipient from NYCF shared her inspiring journey, reminding attendees of the profound impact of their support.

A special honoree of the evening was Mr. Ted Okon, Executive Director of the Community Oncology Alliance, whose tireless efforts and advocacy for cancer patients have made a significant difference in the field of oncology.

The NYCF would like to express its deep appreciation for the support of the 2023 sponsors, whose generosity played a pivotal role in the success of the gala:

American Regent	Eisai	Patient Point
Beigene	Gilead	Sanofi
Cairo Diagnostics	GSK	Spectrum
Daiichi Sankyo	Novartis	Pharmaceuticals
Eagle Pharmaceuticals	One Oncology	Vanguard Pharm

For more information or media inquiries, please contact:
Executive Director, NYCF Tina Toulon at ttoulon@nycancer.com

About the New York Cancer Foundation (NYCF)

The New York Cancer Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) organization that offers financial assistance to patients in the Greater New York Metro Area with cancer diagnoses. Our foundation strives to relieve qualified patients of financial stressors of day-to-day living expenses, including rent/mortgage payments and utility payments.









Regina Roundtree

Celebrating 25 Years of Service

Regina Roundtree has been part of the New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS) team for an incredible quarter-century. Starting her journey as a Lab Assistant/Processor when NYCBS was known as North Shore Hematology Oncology Associates (NSHOA), Regina has ensured the seamless processing of vital medical samples, overseeing both day and overnight Lab Assistants. As Processing Lab Supervisor, she remains committed to ensuring doctors have prompt access to test results for the best patient care.

Regina recalls her early days with NYCBS, where the company was a fraction of its current size, with just two offices and another in the works. She acknowledges the company's meteoric growth with awe, crediting it to visionary management.

When asked about her enduring career, Regina shares, "I believe you have to have a caring spirit and dedication for the patients within you to keep going. I have some amazing co-workers where we support one another. This type of support makes us more like family,

especially since there are days when more time is spent working than with our own families."

What has fueled Regina's dedication for 25 years? It's the patients. Having witnessed the journeys of family and friends battling cancer and blood disorders, most of them under NYCBS's care, Regina has seen firsthand the excellent medical attention they receive. Her bond with colleagues and the patients she serves has transformed her workplace into a second family.

Regina's retirement may be on the horizon, but not just yet. Her compassion, empathy, and dedication to caring for others are qualities deeply ingrained in her.

Outside the lab, Regina enjoys vacationing in the Caribbean and cherishing precious moments with her 15-month-old grandson.

Happy 25 Years of Service, Regina!



What are you thankful for?

"The health and happiness of my two doggies." **Tara M. Receptionist**

"My family, my new house, and my coworkers!"

Patricia D. Director of Credentialing

"This position, thankful for my home, health, and kids." **Roxana Front Desk Radiology**

"My smoking hot wife, two awesome sons and the journey we're taking together." **Owens - Creative Director**

"My two beautiful children, Lyla & Alex!" **Crystal L. Licensed Practical Nurse**

"My grandparents." **Chloe Lab Medical Assistant**

"Having a position in a company that supports, nurtures, and makes me feel like I matter and my words are heard. I am thankful to have managers there for me and others who listen and support us." **Leigh Q. Patient Communications Operator**

"Dr. Nawaz, who caught my mom's cancer reoccurrence early enough and that she is doing great with her treatments. My mom has been a patient of Dr. Nawaz for about 15 years, and to be working for the company that saved my mom's life means a lot to me." **Ashley C. Administrative Assistant**

"Almost 5 years cancer-free (thanks to the wonderful Dr. Chu and breast surgeon Dr. Dietch). I am thankful I have a healthy husband, children, and family. I am thankful for the great women I work with every day at PJ Lower Level Women Imaging and Suffolk OB&YN!" **Lori R. Radiology Coordinator**



"My new position and growth within the company. I am also grateful for my husband, children, family & friends." **Danielle M. Clerical Training Specialist-East**

"The greatness of the small things we have in life." **Stephanie G. Lab Medical Assistant**

"My new accomplishment becoming a Medical Assistant. I am thankful for my loving son, family, and friends who helped support me through the rough year I've been having." **Kiyana Call Center**

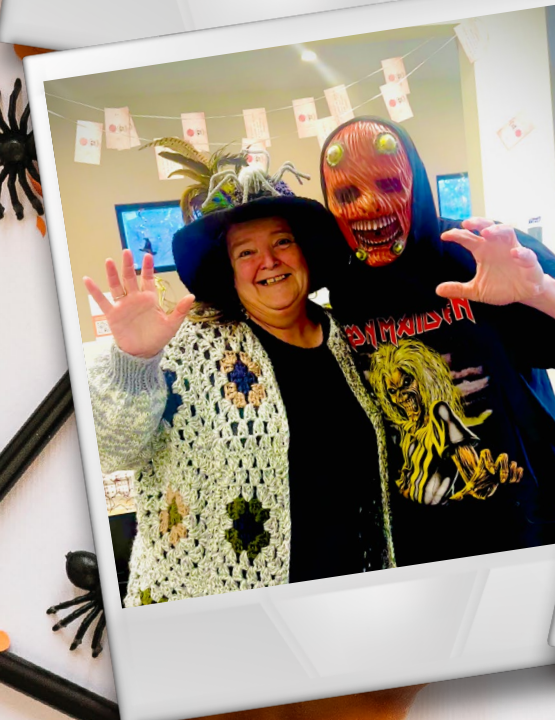
"My family. Most importantly my mother, my father, my daughter Madison, my fiancé, and of course the remainder of my family. In May of 2023 I graduated with my Associate's Degree and now moving forward to receive my Bachelor's Degree in Science. I am very grateful for the opportunity and the drive I have in doing so." **Adalia C. CCM Medical Assistant**

"The opportunity to live out my passion each day; providing care to those who need it most and alongside the most incredible team." **Brittany F. Registered Nurse**





HAPPY HALLOWEEN



HAPPY HALLOWEEN



HAPPY HALLOWEEN

Adopt-A-Family

Annual Tradition

In memory of Geri Shumway, a dedicated Chemo Scheduler at our Setauket office for many years, the team at New York Cancer & Blood Specialists is proudly upholding her legacy of selflessness by continuing our "Adopting a Family" tradition during the holiday season. Our mission is to raise essential funds to support 45 families, each with a target of \$500. These funds will be channeled towards providing holiday meals and gifts to the families of cancer patients in need who receive care at our facility. Our collaboration with the patients' care teams will ensure the funds reach those who require support. The distribution will be facilitated through GoFundMe to the designated recipients.



FRESH MEADOWS

NYCBS Newest Location Opens

On October 16th, 2023, our Bayside office relocated to a brand new, state-of-the-art facility at 6118 190th Street, Suite 217, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365

Staffed by world-class physicians, the state-of-the-art facility offers a modern design, advanced medical equipment, and comfortable patient-centric spaces to create an environment that fosters healing, comfort, and hope.

The center is truly a testament to our unwavering commitment to providing the highest quality care to our community, offering a comprehensive approach to cancer care that addresses the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of our patients.

To make an appointment, call 718-279-9101



Career Opportunities

APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER / PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) Ridge	INFUSION LPN Port Jefferson	LPN CARE COORDINATION Elmhurst
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) Port Jefferson	INFUSION LPN Bayside	LPN CARE COORDINATION Elmhurst
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) Setauket	INTAKE LPN Port Jefferson	LPN CLINICAL & DEVELOPMENT TRAINING SPECIALIST Manhattan
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) Queens	INTAKE LPN Riverhead	MEDICAL ASSISTANT (CHRONIC CARE MANAGEMENT) Ridge
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) Bronx	INTAKE LPN Brooklyn	MEDICAL FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST New Hyde Park
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) Southampton	INTAKE LPN Huntington	MEDICAL FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST Port Jefferson
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) Forest Hills	INTAKE LPN Patchogue	MEDICAL FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST - Float Queens
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) Smithtown	INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY RN (BSN/RN) West Hampton	MEDICAL FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST - Float Suffolk County
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) New Hyde Park	CLINICAL INVENTORY CONTROL SPECIALIST Port Jefferson	MEDICAL RESEARCH COORDINATOR Shirley
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) - FLOAT Suffolk County	LAB INTEGRATION SPECIALIST - QUALITY ASSURANCE COORDINATOR Port Jefferson	NEW PATIENT COORDINATOR Ridge
APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT) [BILINGUAL - SPANISH] Patchogue	LAB TECHNICIAN - NYS LICENSED Riverhead	NURSE PRACTITIONER (NP) / PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA) Manhattan
CERTIFIED PHARMACY TECHNICIAN East Setauket	LABORATORY TECHNOLOGIST (NYS LICENSED)MANHATTAN LPN - CARE COORDINATION Queens	NURSE PRACTITIONER (NP) / PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA) Bronx
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (COO) Ridge	LPN - MEDICAL RESEARCH COORDINATOR New Hyde Park	NYS LICENSED LAB TECHNICIAN - NEW HYDE PARK Riverhead
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (PRESIDENT) Ridge	LPN CARE COORDINATION Riverhead	NYS LICENSED LAB TECHNICIAN Patchogue
HEAD NURSE (RN/BSN) Forest Hills	LPN CARE COORDINATION Manhattan	RESEARCH COORDINATOR Patchogue
	LPN CARE COORDINATION Bronx	SENIOR DIRECTOR - IT SUPPORT Ridge
	LPN CARE COORDINATION Middletown	TRIAGE REGISTERED NURSE Shirley
		VICE PRESIDENT OF REVENUE CYCLE MANAGEMENT Ridge

Know of someone looking for a new career with upward mobility?
[CLICK HERE](#)

New Hires

Andrea Arreaga (Radiology Coordinator)	Michelle Barakayeva (Registered Nurse)
Brittani Schwartz (Patient Communications Operator)	Michelle Franqui (Medical Front Desk Receptionist)
Christina Gardiner (Director of Nursing)	Mili Biju (Nurse Practitioner)
Claudia Vanessa (Patient Communications Operator)	Serra Izmirligil (Patient Communications Operator)
Colina Wong (Care Coordination, LPN)	Shannon Munday (Nurse Practitioner)
Courtney Hauf (Nurse Practitioner)	Stephanie Best-Lutchman Intake (LPN PCP Ronkonkoma)
Eliza Rodriguez (Patient Communications Operator)	Sunali Nagi (Medical azzFront Desk Receptionist)
Heather Sulzbach (Nurse Practitioner)	Vivien Varga (Nurse Practitioner)
Jamie Zanfardino (Patient Communications Operator)	Yeshua Thomas (Hematology Supervisor)
Kysha Simms (Radiation Coordinator)	
Laura Brandes (MRI Technologist)	

Conquering Cancer Together Podcast

On “Conquering Cancer Together” we’ll talk about the latest cancer health information and take a deep dive into everything we need to know from screening and testing. We’ll discuss the latest cancer treatment information, research updates, resources to turn to and happenings in our community. Hosted by

Wendy Kaplan, MS, RDN, CSO, CDCES, CDN
and **MaryAnn Fragola DNP, ANPc, ACHPN.**

To listen to the Podcast please
[CLICK HERE](#)



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.