



## Cancer Care 2015 Annual Report

*The heart and science of medicine.*

University of Vermont  
HEALTH NETWORK

Central Vermont Medical Center

## OUR MISSION

To provide patient centered, compassionate care to the central Vermont community.

As the recently appointed chairman to the Cancer Committee I look forward to working with our dedicated team providing compassionate oncology care in a community setting. At the University of Vermont Health Network – Central Vermont Medical Center, we will continue to provide a multilayered approach to cancer care which includes patient integrative services, palliative care, community outreach and clinical trials.

I join other members of the cancer committee in thanking Dr. John Valentine for his leadership over the past 4 years as cancer committee chair and for his decades of providing excellent cancer care in central Vermont.



Daniel Fran MD

Highlights of our 2015 planned initiatives can be found on the back cover.



## THE CANCER CARE TEAM



Central Vermont Medical Center is a member of the University of Vermont Health Network.

Our cancer care program is accredited with commendation by the American College of Surgeons, Commission on Cancer (ACoS, CoC).

The 2014 Cancer Committee was a multidisciplinary group that provided leadership for the cancer care program. Physician members included Dr. John Valentine, medical oncologist; Dr. Ed Ziedins, surgeon; Dr. Daniel Fram, radiation oncologist; Dr. Cathy Palmer, pathologist; Dr. Joseph Pekala, radiologist; and Dr. Jonna Goulding, Palliative Care Program Director. Other members represent a variety of disciplines, including cancer registry, patient navigation, clinical research, nursing, social work, quality management and administration.

*(Top photo) Radiation and Medical oncology team; (center photo) Radiation Therapists at National Life Cancer Treatment Center; (bottom photo) Theresa Lever, Cancer Program Patient Navigator .*



### **Coordinated Approach to Cancer Care**

A multidisciplinary approach to cancer care allowed us to provide a full scope of services to our 300 new cancer patients in 2014. Treatment plans were comprehensive because clinical information was drawn from radiology, pathology, medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgery, oncology nursing, palliative care, and specialties. Our support services included psychotherapy, patient navigation and rehabilitation. Our registered dietitian counseled 191 patients at no charge. We were pleased to offer free complementary care to our patients, providing 264 acupuncture treatments, 174 sessions of massage and 227 sessions of Reiki.

### **Clinical Trials**

Comprehensive cancer care includes access to clinical research trials. We participate in the National Cancer Institute National Clinical Trials Network as an affiliate of the University of Vermont Cancer Center. The number of our patients who participated in clinical trials in 2014 exceeded the ACoS, CoC standard.



### **Cancer Conference**

Multidisciplinary Cancer Conferences are an essential part of our treatment planning process at UVM Health Network – CVMC because they provide clinical information, cancer staging and multidisciplinary

treatment recommendations for the patient's disease. They enhance disease management and outcomes and provide educational opportunities for physicians and other members of the clinical team.

In 2014, 111 cases were prepared for presentation and discussion at Cancer Conference and all were presented for prospective treatment input and collaboration.



### **Palliative and Spiritual Care**

Our palliative care team is led by Dr. Jonna Goulding who is certified by the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Dr. Goulding and her team work with patients and families to help them make medical decisions that align with their goals.

The palliative care team also focuses on managing symptoms, so that patients have the highest possible quality of life during and after cancer treatment.

### Cancer Program Quality Initiatives

We are committed to improving processes and developing programs for a positive patient experience and the best clinical outcomes. Through our accreditation with the ACoS, CoC and use of its benchmarking tools, we assess the quality of our cancer care and initiate improvements. Our 2014 quality activities included:

- Participation in Radiation Oncology Group (RTOG) clinical trials for the first time
- Increased educational programs for oncology and professional staff
- Enhancements in our Palliative Care Program

One highlight of our quality improvement efforts in 2014 was the development of a survivorship program.

### 2014 by the numbers

#### Cancer Treatment

- 300 patients newly diagnosed with cancer
- 111 cases presented at multidisciplinary cancer conferences
- 245 new radiation patients
- 4,429 total radiation treatments
- 745 visits from patients after radiation treatment
- 346 new medical oncology patients
- 2337 total infusions in the chemotherapy suite

#### Support Services

- 191 free sessions of nutrition counseling
- 264 free acupuncture treatments
- 174 free massage sessions
- 227 free Reiki sessions
- 11,312 Branches of Hope funds paid for patient needs

#### Susan G. Komen grant

- 23 women with subsidized breast imaging
- 109 women who received breast care education and referrals at People's Health and Wellness
- 1000 conversations with our outreach worker



### **Survivorship Program**

The 14 million people living with a cancer diagnosis in the United States—38,000 in Vermont—have prompted a growing focus on cancer survivorship. Our Cancer Committee recognized the importance of identifying and meeting the needs of survivors. We began by conducting a survey of patients who came for post-treatment appointments over 6 months. We learned from the 375 respondents that there are survivorship concerns we can address by continuing to offer many of our services to patients who have completed treatment.

We joined with a community partner—the *Kindred Connections* program of the *Vermont Cancer Survivor Network*—to create and implement a regular survivorship meeting for patients who recently completed treatment. The hour-long luncheon meeting, attended by a multidisciplinary group of five professional staff and a *Kindred Connections* representative, emphasizes what patients can expect as they enter the survivorship stage of cancer and how our cancer program will continue to be of service to them.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH



### **Community Outreach**

We support our community by offering cancer awareness, prevention and screening programs. In 2014 our oncology staff provided community education on lung cancer, blood cancer, cancer nutrition and cancer rehabilitation. We partnered with local radio stations on a month-long promotion of breast cancer screening. We hosted a National Cancer Survivors Day event and participated in the Stowe Weekend of Hope, the Central Vermont Relay for Life, the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and the Vermont Breast Cancer Conference.

### **Screening Program**

With the help of a generous grant from the VT-NH Affiliate of Susan G. Komen, we continued our efforts to make breast cancer screening easily accessible to Central Vermont women. The Komen grant subsidized breast imaging for 23 women and enabled our outreach worker to talk about breast cancer prevention and screening with nearly 1,000 women in Washington and Lamoille Counties. We collaborated with People's Health and Wellness Clinic—a longstanding partner—to provide breast care education and referrals to 109 women.

*Photo: Kiki Rose, CVMC's Komen funded breast care outreach worker.*



### Prevention Program

2014 was the final year of a three-year focus on tobacco cessation. The Vermont Department of Health reports that, “Tobacco is still the leading cause of preventable death. Of the estimated 75,500 adult Vermonters who smoked in 2010, half of those who continue will likely die of a smoking-related cause.”

Our goal was to incorporate an evidence-based intervention called the **5A's** into CVMC practices. This intervention is proven to be effective in helping people stop using tobacco.

1. **ASK** if the person uses tobacco
2. **ADVISE** the person to stop
3. **ASSESS** the person's level of readiness to stop
4. **ASSIST** by referring to programs or prescribing medication
5. **ARRANGE** for follow-up

## PATIENT TESTIMONIAL



*“In September I went to my primary care doctor with all these weird symptoms and after some tests they knew something was going on. They sent me to The University of Vermont Medical Center and I was diagnosed with leukemia. I spent 43 days there for bone marrow biopsies and treatment.*

*I continue my treatment at CVMC as an outpatient. It’s a relief not to travel. Dr. Valentine explained everything. He answered all my questions – he’s very thorough. The nurses are awesome– they make me laugh and take really good care of me.*

*I have felt well my entire time at CVMC. The team helped me manage things to feel OK so I have not been sick and I have not lost my hair.*

*I have just a few more treatments. I’m so grateful...to everyone. I have been very lucky. Thank you.”*

Serge Dupuis, Barre, shown here with  
Wendy Herring, RN, certified oncology nurse



*“I always felt very supported and cared for. My husband and I had no doubts or concerns about the medical treatment and care I received. I felt like I mattered – not just the physical me but the emotional me also.”*

Cara Brown

Cara Brown’s routine mammogram revealed the need for more tests. After a biopsy by Dr. Ed Ziedins confirmed breast cancer, she and her husband saw medical oncologist Dr. John Valentine. Cara was pleased that he took time to answer their many questions. She then met the Dr. Dan Fram and the radiation oncology team, who explained everything to Cara and her concerned young sons. This was important to Cara because, as she put it, *“My cancer affected my whole family.”*

Cara took advantage of free Reiki, acupuncture and massage therapy, consulted with the patient navigator, met the social worker, worked with the dietitian, and participated in rehab’s post-treatment fitness program. Cara appreciated that the entire team encouraged and cared for her both during and after her treatment.

*Photo: Cara Brown’s sons needed to understand their mom’s cancer treatment so Lorne Church, lead Radiation Oncology therapist, invited them for a tour and the opportunity to ask questions.*

## 2015 PLANNED INITIATIVES

### A preview of highlights of our 2015 planned initiatives:

- Improve the referral process for patients who will benefit from treatment of cancer-related cognitive changes (commonly known as “chemo-brain”)
- Increase the number of lung cancer screenings
- Support staff education by addressing the following topics:
  - nutrition during cancer treatment
  - medical marijuana
  - complementary and integrative oncology
  - Lynch Syndrome
  - colon cancer
- Host bone marrow drives
- Increase HPV vaccination rates in CVMC practices - the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine is a cancer prevention immunization
- Partner with Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc. to improve cancer screening rates for their clients
- Offer an on-site personalized service to address cancer-related hair loss
- Continue community partnerships with the Vermont Cancer Survivor Network/Kindred Connections, Vermonters Taking Action Against Cancer, Stowe Weekend of Hope, American Cancer Society and Susan G. Komen VT-NH to broaden our cancer care outreach

THE  
**University of Vermont**  
HEALTH NETWORK

**Central Vermont Medical Center**

**National Life Cancer Treatment Center:**

Radiation Oncology / Patient Support Services

**MountainView Medical Oncology and Hematology**

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