Together We Fight Cancer

Throughout 2016, Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center sought to continuously expand and enhance how we provide comprehensive cancer care for our friends and neighbors in Yuma County and beyond.

With the welcomed addition of Dr. Abhinav Chandra as the medical director, the Cancer Center realized its vision of providing comprehensive care for patients. Thanks to a vision shared by our entire team, patient satisfaction scores continued to climb, and there has been an increased priority on collaboration with community physicians.

We are proud to share highlights of our progress in 2016 and what we look forward to expanding in 2017:

• We welcomed new leadership, with Dr. Abhinav Chandra, medical oncologist and medical director, and Marla Moore, RN, clinical director, joined the team.
• Our team successfully worked to decrease the wait time for a first appointment and increase patient satisfaction scores.
• Carrie Lopez, NP came to the Cancer Center as the first nurse practitioner recruited to the team in March 2016, taking the lead on our new survivorship program.
• In July 2016, radiation oncologist Dr. Maked Botos joined our team from Medical College of Wisconsin.
• Dr. Brenda Ernst, medical oncologist from Mayo Clinic, joined in July 2016 and will be leading the creation of a comprehensive breast cancer program.
• Dr. Sarah Medina-Rodriguez joined the center as the Director of Institutional Research, with a focus on expanding access to clinical trials.
• We enhanced the level of care offered to our patients by growing rehabilitative services by adding lymphedema, speech and swallow therapies. We also strengthened the supportive care program by expanding pain and palliative care services.
• Dr. Sarah Medina-Rodriguez joined the center as the Director of Institutional Research, with a focus on expanding access to clinical trials.
• We welcomed new leadership, with Dr. Abhinav Chandra, medical oncologist and medical director, and Marla Moore, RN, clinical director, joined the team.

As a team of dedicated physicians, nurses and staff, we are extremely proud of the comprehensive services that our Cancer Center offers. We look forward to continuing to further deepen and develop service to our region.

Building a New Head & Neck Cancer Program

Patients deserve quality cancer care close to home

“We have always had the ability at our Cancer Center to treat patients with head and neck cancer, but most patients needing surgery were forced to travel to another city,” said Dr. Robert Takesuye, radiation oncologist at Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center. “With the arrival of Dr. David Hohuan, Board Certified Head and Neck Surgeon who is also a Facial and Reconstructive Surgeon, we are now able to treat these patients right here in Yuma. We are proud to be able to provide this convenient access to care to patients at a time in their lives that they need the support of their family and friends the most.”

Dr. Hohuan, who trained at Yale, serves on the medical staff at Yuma Regional Medical Center. He recently moved to Yuma and practices at ENT of Yuma.

The Head and Neck Cancer Program will offer comprehensive and customized care for patients, featuring a multidisciplinary team of medical professionals and physicians who will work closely together to determine a customized treatment plan for each patient.

The professionals involved in treating patients with head and neck cancer range from medical and radiation oncologists and interventional radiologists to physical therapists, speech pathologists and otolaryngologists.

The location of head and neck tumors can cause patients to experience difficulty communicating and swallowing. These challenges may require help from a speech-language pathologist.

Patients may need surgery, chemotherapy and or radiation therapy, treatment that can further hinder movement of the mouth, throat, larynx, tongue and other areas of the head and neck. To provide a truly comprehensive program, our partners at Southwest Rehabilitation hired Joann Mwangi, a speech pathologist, to specifically to work with cancer patients.

“As we work to develop a comprehensive Head and Neck Cancer Program, our team of physicians and experts are coming together to work collaboratively and create the most advanced treatment options for patients,” Dr. Takesuye said. “Working together, we can elevate the quality of cancer care in our community.”
Sarah’s Story

The day they met in our Cancer Center waiting room, two patients didn’t realize they were creating a powerful link for their community. What began as a simple conversation between strangers led to a powerful connection—and Hope Brigade was born.

Sarah Halligan-Wright remembers walking into that waiting room at Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center feeling frustrated and down. She was there for one of her last radiation treatments. After a while, she began talking with fellow patients.

What followed was a conversation filled with much-needed ideas, support and heartfelt understanding that only cancer survivors can give to each other.

Halligan-Wright went home that day, not only feeling better— but feeling uplifted, empowered and ready to live. She also left the Cancer Center that day with the building idea of sharing that same kind of process support with other cancer patients—by creating a support group.

“Our conversation had been so therapeutic. We stayed three hours after we had our treatment that day,” recalled Halligan-Wright. “We were able to talk with each other.

She added, “I left there so happy, so excited. I knew we needed to share that same kind of priceless comfort and reassurance. What followed was a conversation filled with much-needed ideas, support and heartfelt understanding that only cancer survivors can give to each other.

Halligan-Wright chose to receive treatment in Yuma after she compared services in regional cities such as Phoenix with what is available here at home. She adds that she also couldn’t imagine having to travel during cancer treatment, being on the road when she would probably feel her very worst.

Just a few months after Halligan-Wright and her friends’ first time meeting each other at the Cancer Center, Hope Brigade is young cancer patients exactly the support and understanding the founding friends had intended. Both male and female cancer patients of all ages and representing all types of cancers attend and enjoy the support groups meetings.

Halligan-Wright explains that a cancer patient simply needs the opportunity to talk with someone who can empathize—truly relate to—conversations about everything from fears and challenges to practical questions about cooking and getting exercise.

“There are just so many resources available for cancer patients. Every time I visit the Cancer Center, there seems to be something new or improved.”

Today, having been blessed so much throughout her own journey with cancer, Halligan-Wright says she just wants to pay it back and help others, in addition to support, she added, much of that help comes in the form of spreading awareness. “There are just so many resources available for cancer patients. Every time I visit the Cancer Center, there seems to be something new or improved,” she said with enthusiasm. “It’s just awesome to see the Cancer Center grow and I want people to know about it.”

Supporting Survivors

As cancer care continues to evolve and improve, more and more cancer patients have the chance to become something wonderful— cancer survivors.

To help enhance this long-term dedication to our patients, Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center created a Survivorship Clinic dedicated to the special needs of cancer survivors.

The care provided by our Cancer Center continues into the survivor stage when needed medically or simply supported by the patient. Our team assures that cancer survivors are always cared for— and always supported.

“Hope Brigade is a wonderful resource for people who have successfully completed chemotherapy and who now can benefit from a plan to monitor their progress for the rest of their lives,” said Martha Blooms, Director of Clinical Operations.

Moore added that the Survivorship Clinic does not replace care a patient might receive. Instead, the clinic’s resources complement other forms of care.

“Some people may need to be connected with resources for further information,” she explained. “The survivorship plan also tells us how often a patient should come back to be checked and what we might look for if cancer should recur.”

For cancer survivors, knowing that the Cancer Center remains vigilant in monitoring their health amounts to peace of mind and reassurance.

“Having this support is a great relief to survivors,” Moore said. “They know they are never alone. They certainly appreciate that.”
Outreach Efforts

2016

Working not only to treat cancer, but a commitment to helping prevent it as well

Through community outreach efforts and valuable community partnerships, Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center fights cancer with a commitment to helping build a healthier community. This year, we were proud to be involved in many important community events, providing valuable prevention education and information about early detection screening.

Some of those community events during 2016 included:

- Boomers & Beyond Living Expo aimed to inspire men and women from the Baby Boomer Generation and older to truly enjoy life to the fullest. The Cancer Center offered attendees free risk assessments and cancer screenings. Clinical experts provided valuable prevention education and information about early detection screening.

- Community presentations provided by the Arizona Western College Community Health Worker Interns.

- Skin cancer screenings provided by a local dermatologist.

- Lung cancer risk assessment offered to the community.

- Breast cancer risk assessments and screenings. During the event, 60 women participated in breast cancer risk assessments, for example, while 78 attendees participated in free skin cancer screenings.

- Mammograms provided by a local radiologist.

- MamCURES offered the community a fun and comfortable environment to receive information about cancer prevention and general health education, along with free mammograms provided by Bridget’s Gift, a local nonprofit organization. As result of the event, 23 women received mammograms and 25 attendees received free skin cancer screenings.

- Bridget’s Gift Concert provided an opportunity for the Cancer Center to partner with Bridget’s Gift to provide focused breast cancer education and awareness to more than 1,200 attendees during a benefit concert. Community members were able to walk through an inflatable educational breast cancer exhibit and 30 women participated in a breast cancer risk assessment.

- 1,200 attendees during a benefit concert. Community members were able to walk through an inflatable educational breast cancer exhibit and 30 women participated in a breast cancer risk assessment.

- Some of those community events during 2016 included:

- Boomers & Beyond Living Expo aimed to inspire men and women from the Baby Boomer Generation and older to truly enjoy life to the fullest. The Cancer Center offered attendees free risk assessments and cancer screenings. Clinical experts provided community members with education and “next steps” based on the results of their assessments and screenings. During the event, 60 women participated in breast cancer risk assessments, for example, while 78 attendees participated in free skin cancer screenings.

- Mammograms provided by a local radiologist.

- MamCURES offered the community a fun and comfortable environment to receive information about cancer prevention and general health education, along with free mammograms provided by Bridget’s Gift, a local nonprofit organization. As result of the event, 23 women received mammograms and 25 attendees received free skin cancer screenings.

- Bridget’s Gift Concert provided an opportunity for the Cancer Center to partner with Bridget’s Gift to provide focused breast cancer education and awareness to more than 1,200 attendees during a benefit concert. Community members were able to walk through an inflatable educational breast cancer exhibit and 30 women participated in a breast cancer risk assessment.

- 1,200 attendees during a benefit concert. Community members were able to walk through an inflatable educational breast cancer exhibit and 30 women participated in a breast cancer risk assessment.

Expanding Our Reach

A major role for success in the battle against cancer is the screening and recognition of preventative measures to avoid the multitude of disorders we call cancer. Although there are nearly 700 cases of cancer reported each year in Yuma County, Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center is dedicated to ensuring the importance of cancer screenings and early detection is understood by our entire community.

Through the funding from a Susan G. Komen grant, the Cancer Center was able to implement a pilot community health worker (promotora) program to expand outreach when educating and screening Spanish speaking residents in our community.

The pilot program’s non-traditional approach to spread breast cancer awareness and early detection, utilizing a group of community health workers. They seek our residents in rural areas that may not have easy access to care and use culturally relevant campaign messaging.

The program is able to flourish through many partnerships that help maximize the grant funding. Partnerships with Regional Center for Border Health, Campagnos in Fronteras, Bridget’s Gift and the Mexican Consulate enable the community health workers to appropriately identify the best resources for women to receive mammograms and future treatment if needed.

Another key aspect of the program is the partnership with the Arizona Western College-Community Health Worker Certification Program. These interns receive valuable experiences with the support of the full time community health worker at the Cancer Center while also expanding the reach of the program.

In the future, the Cancer Center is looking to expand the program to include additional types of cancer screenings and education.

Community Health Worker Impact by the Numbers

- 3 other medical services
- 26 AHCCCS
- 37 women referred to Regional Center for Border Health

- 3 cancer screenings and education.

- 635 women and 88 men reached through educational sessions
- 1,373 families reached through outreach activities
- 21 total women referred for mammograms screening
- 14 women referred using Susan G. Komen Grant
- 37 women referred to Regional Center for Border Health

*September 1 to December 31, 2016

- Education and outreach provided in:
  - Cholla
  - Fort Mohave
  - Eloy
  - Sun Lakes
  - Yuma
  - Yuma East
  - Yuma West

- 1 woman referred on for additional screening
- 84.5 hours volunteered to the program by 7 Arizona Western College-Community Health Worker interns
- Referrals for additional financial programs
- 26 ARFCCS
- 8 Health Insurance Marketplace
- 2discounted medications or medical programs
- 16 medical services
- 3 other
This year marked another important milestone for Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center – the first year that the Cancer Center has been fully staffed with our own providers. Since the program’s inception, several of our providers have retired and departed. We are proud to once again have a full complement of medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and an allied health professional dedicated to not only our patients, but our community.

Together we fight cancer with compassion, knowledge & hope
leave Zold feeling less like a patient and more like a friend. The worry ended when Zold and her husband looked into treatment offered at Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center. The couple was also grateful to learn that the highly-skilled cancer care she needed was available right here in their own community.

When Barbara Zold was diagnosed with breast cancer, the Yuma grandmother did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. Zold, 82, did not want to travel the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. The worrying ended when Zold and her husband looked into treatment offered at Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center. They discovered that the care she needed was available right here in their own community. The couple was also grateful to learn that the highly-skilled cancer care she needed was available right here in their own community.

When Barbara Zold was diagnosed with breast cancer, the Yuma grandmother did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. Zold, 82, did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. The worrying ended when Zold and her husband looked into treatment offered at Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center. They discovered that the care she needed was available right here in their own community. The couple was also grateful to learn that the highly-skilled cancer care she needed was available right here in their own community.

When Barbara Zold was diagnosed with breast cancer, the Yuma grandmother did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. Zold, 82, did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. The worrying ended when Zold and her husband looked into treatment offered at Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center. They discovered that the care she needed was available right here in their own community. The couple was also grateful to learn that the highly-skilled cancer care she needed was available right here in their own community.

When Barbara Zold was diagnosed with breast cancer, the Yuma grandmother did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. Zold, 82, did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. The worrying ended when Zold and her husband looked into treatment offered at Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center. They discovered that the care she needed was available right here in their own community. The couple was also grateful to learn that the highly-skilled cancer care she needed was available right here in their own community.

When Barbara Zold was diagnosed with breast cancer, the Yuma grandmother did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. Zold, 82, did not want to trade the comfort and security of home for a hotel room in some bigger town hundreds of miles away. The worrying ended when Zold and her husband looked into treatment offered at Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center. They discovered that the care she needed was available right here in their own community. The couple was also grateful to learn that the highly-skilled cancer care she needed was available right here in their own community.
Cancer Registry

Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center maintains a detailed cancer registry to document important information about cancer patients in the community, including the types of cancer they have, the treatments they receive, the age at which they developed cancer and other critical factors. This data is then used to study cancer trends and identify potential opportunities for early detection and/or treatment. The cancer registrar coordinates the activities of the tumor board, which is composed of physicians with diverse medical expertise, who meets to review patient cases and determine the best course of treatment.

To help meet a cancer patient’s needs for support that reaches beyond medicine, Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center proudly shares its facility with the Cancer Resource Center. The center’s support is available to anyone in the Yuma community receiving cancer treatment.

A dedicated volunteer staff oversees the Cancer Resource Center, which is made possible by generous donations of money and materials from our community.

The center’s faithful mission is to provide patients with free resources to ease the burden their journey through cancer.

In 2005, the Cancer Resource Center was started by Louise Jacobson, a local cancer survivor who noticed a lack of resources available for cancer patients in our community. Through a partnership with the American Cancer Society - and eventually Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center - the resource center is able to serve our community four days a week.

Services and resources offered include:
- Informational resources & support
- Head coverings, including wigs, hats & scarves
- Blankets
- Supplemental nutrition
- Bras & prosthetics
- Gas certificates

Additional free resources coordinated through the American Cancer Society:
- Road to Recovery - rides to appointments
- Reach for Recovery - breast cancer support
- Look Good Feel Better - skin care & makeup instruction and kits for people receiving cancer treatment
- Hope Lodging - support securing lodging near treatment facility

In five months the Cancer Resource Center reached 1,211 patients and provided:
- $11,560 in gas cards given to 221 patients
- 4,842 cans of liquid nutrition
- 62 head coverings
- 42 specialized bras
- 83 blankets
- 69 patients participated in Look Good Feel Better
- 5 patients participated in Reach to Recovery
- 19 patients used Hope Lodging

Free Resources Help Ease the Burden of Cancer Treatment

Patients deserve support close at hand, within their own community

In five months the Cancer Resource Center reached 1,211 patients and provided:
- $11,560 in gas cards given to 221 patients
- 4,842 cans of liquid nutrition
- 62 head coverings
- 42 specialized bras
- 83 blankets
- 69 patients participated in Look Good Feel Better
- 5 patients participated in Reach to Recovery
- 19 patients used Hope Lodging

Cancer Resource Center by the Numbers

In five months the Cancer Resource Center reached 1,211 patients and provided:
- $11,560 in gas cards given to 221 patients
- 4,842 cans of liquid nutrition
- 62 head coverings
- 42 specialized bras
- 83 blankets
- 69 patients participated in Look Good Feel Better
- 5 patients participated in Reach to Recovery
- 19 patients used Hope Lodging

Cancer Registry

Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center maintains a detailed cancer registry to document important information about cancer patients in the community, including the types of cancer they have, the treatments they receive, the age at which they developed cancer and other critical factors. This data is then used to study cancer trends and identify potential opportunities for early detection and/or treatment. The cancer registrar coordinates the activities of the tumor board, which is composed of physicians with diverse medical expertise, who meets to review patient cases and determine the best course of treatment.

To help meet a cancer patient’s needs for support that reaches beyond medicine, Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center proudly shares its facility with the Cancer Resource Center. The center’s support is available to anyone in the Yuma community receiving cancer treatment.

A dedicated volunteer staff oversees the Cancer Resource Center, which is made possible by generous donations of money and materials from our community.

The center’s faithful mission is to provide patients with free resources to ease the burden their journey through cancer.

In 2005, the Cancer Resource Center was started by Louise Jacobson, a local cancer survivor who noticed a lack of resources available for cancer patients in our community. Through a partnership with the American Cancer Society - and eventually Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center - the resource center is able to serve our community four days a week.

Services and resources offered include:
- Informational resources & support
- Head coverings, including wigs, hats & scarves
- Blankets
- Supplemental nutrition
- Bras & prosthetics
- Gas certificates

Additional free resources coordinated through the American Cancer Society:
- Road to Recovery - rides to appointments
- Reach for Recovery - breast cancer support
- Look Good Feel Better - skin care & makeup instruction and kits for people receiving cancer treatment
- Hope Lodging - support securing lodging near treatment facility

In five months the Cancer Resource Center reached 1,211 patients and provided:
- $11,560 in gas cards given to 221 patients
- 4,842 cans of liquid nutrition
- 62 head coverings
- 42 specialized bras
- 83 blankets
- 69 patients participated in Look Good Feel Better
- 5 patients participated in Reach to Recovery
- 19 patients used Hope Lodging

Cancer Resource Center by the Numbers

In five months the Cancer Resource Center reached 1,211 patients and provided:
- $11,560 in gas cards given to 221 patients
- 4,842 cans of liquid nutrition
- 62 head coverings
- 42 specialized bras
- 83 blankets
- 69 patients participated in Look Good Feel Better
- 5 patients participated in Reach to Recovery
- 19 patients used Hope Lodging
Weaving a Legacy

Woven together by the hands of cancer patients or their loved ones, each ribbon, strip of cloth or colorful memento making up this beautiful tapestry honors a patient’s courageous journey.

Some of those journeys continue.

Others ended in bravery.

Some of those journeys continue.

Weaving a Legacy, a tapestry woven together by the hands of cancer patients and their loved ones. Each ribbon, strip of cloth or colorful memento making up this beautiful tapestry honors a patient’s courageous journey.

The paintings, drawings, photographs and pieces of sculpture can be found throughout the Cancer Center, brightening spaces ranging from waiting areas and hallways to areas where patients receive treatments.

In addition to the art pieces themselves, Art Heals also features Weaving a Legacy, a tapestry woven together by the hands of cancer patients and their loved ones. Each ribbon, strip of cloth or colorful memento making up this beautiful tapestry honors a patient’s courageous journey.

The Art Heals exhibition was unveiled on September 16. That sits as a remarkable footnote in Masako Robbins’ life.

The artist died knowing that her final gift of art happened exactly as she had dreamed. “I feel very honored to participate in Art Heals,” Robbins shared in an interview not long before her passing. “I have had so many people tell me that when they have a problem, days on end in front of my paintings and they feel peace. Maybe this can give them hope. I would like that very much.”

The Art Heals exhibition opened to the public in September of 2016, offering an artistic journey that features 28 local artists and over 100 pieces of art that are now on display throughout the entire Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center.