Together We Fight Cancer

Delivering quality, compassionate cancer care in our community is the guiding mission of Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center. It is an honor and a privilege for us to serve the residents of Yuma, our surrounding communities and those who call our area home during the winter months.

As we look back on 2018, we are proud to highlight the significant progress we have made in enhancing the quality and accessibility of cancer care in our region.

• On average, we are able to see new cancer patients within five business days of their initial referral.
• We continue to provide 24/7 care to our patients by ensuring that a doctor is always on call and available to answer questions any time of the day.
• The Center formed a partnership with the Yuma Regional Medical Center Family Medicine Center to educate patients about early detection of colon cancer and to help save lives by increasing the rate of colon cancer screenings in our community.
• Our Cancer Center was one of only three cancer centers nationwide to be chosen by the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) to share best practices in the treatment of multiple myeloma.
• Cancer Center staff members presented posters at two symposiums hosted by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), published five articles in peer-reviewed medical publications and a book chapter on lymphoma.
• Four of our nurses achieved advanced certifications in adult oncology this year. Carrie Lopez, D.N.P., received her Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner (AOCNP) certification, and Candace Manville, R.N., Laura Castilla, R.N. and Erica Martinez, R.N. received their Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN) credentials.
• 200 Cancer Center cancer patient cases were reviewed by a multi-disciplinary tumor board consisting of medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, surgeons and other specialists to determine best possible treatments and care plans.
• We are continuing to expand patient access to supportive and palliative care services, as well as increasing our offerings of clinical trials.
• We have expanded our survivorship program, so once a patient’s therapies are completed, their care doesn’t stop. We provide them with a survivorship care plan to help them monitor and maintain their health going forward.
• Our patient satisfaction score of likelihood to recommend the Cancer Center is consistently above 93 percent.

Looking ahead to 2019, our plans to expand and strengthen our service to the community at the Cancer Center include:

• Staff expansion, including the addition of radiation oncologist Dr. Harvey Wilds as a full-time staff member and the recruiting of two additional medical oncologists: Dr. Angela Saverimuthu and Dr. Arun Kumar Ragaswar.
• Continued expansion of our research program with the implementation of a state-of-the-art clinical trial for breast cancer treatment – MonarchE trial.
• Adding financial navigation assistance to support services offered to our patients.

Providing a high level of cancer care requires a team effort. We are grateful for the partnerships we have established with medical professionals and organizations in our community, and for the trust placed in us by the patients and families in all of the communities we serve. We are very proud to be able to say that together, we fight cancer.

Thank You, Dr. Yang

Our Cancer Center would not be what it is today without the dedicated efforts of Gregory Yang, M.D., who retired earlier this year. Dr. Yang was instrumental in facilitating the transition from the former cancer facility to our new Cancer Center when it opened in 2014. “He had a passion for research and also a passion for genetics and out-of-the-box thinking,” said Cancer Center Medical Director Abhinav Chandra, M.D. “We wish him good luck in his retirement.”

We welcome our new providers

Bridgett Allen, N.P. – C.
Specialty: Oncology and Hematology
• Master of Science in Nursing: Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ
• Master of Science in Nursing Education: Chamberlain College of Nursing in Phoenix, AZ

Mak Shrivastava, M.D.
Specialty: Oncology and Hematology
• Medical Degree: Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas Medical College and King Edward Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, India
• Internal Medicine Residencies:
  - Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College and General Hospital in Mumbai, India
  - Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University/ Jacobi Medical Center in Bronx, NY
• Hematology and Oncology Fellowship: Maimonides Medical Center and Coney Island Hospital in Brooklyn, NY
• Board certified in internal medicine, hematology and medical oncology

Raj Vaddepally, M.D.
Specialty: Oncology and Hematology
• Medical Degree:
  - Osmania Medical College and General Hospital in Hyderabad, India
  - Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College and General Hospital in Mumbai, India
  - Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas Medical College and King Edward Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, India
  - Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College and General Hospital in Mumbai, India
• Internal Medicine Residencies:
  - St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, MI
  - Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, MI
• Hematology and Oncology Fellowship: Josephine Ford Cancer Institute at Henry Ford Hospital, affiliated with Wayne State University in Detroit, MI
• Board certified in internal medicine, hematology and medical oncology
In 2016, long-time Yuma resident Lupita Gonzalez noticed a change in one of her breasts. But like many women, she just rationalized it away. "I didn't have any pain," she said. "I didn't even feel a bump. I just noticed a change in the tissue was starting to change." She said. "I didn't want to ignore that, so I went to my doctor. But like many women, she just rationalized it away. "I didn't have any pain," she said. "I didn't even feel a bump. I just noticed a change in the tissue was starting to change." She said. "I didn't want to ignore that, so I went to my doctor."

Something unexpected happened, though, that led her to take it more seriously. Her daughter was sitting in school one day when she heard a voice say, "Don't be afraid to die." When she came home from school, she told her Mom what happened. "I kind of got worried," Lupita said. "I didn't want to ignore that, so I went to my doctor."

Lupita learned that she would need to undergo surgery at the Cancer Center, including the fact the staff was available to call if she needed them at any time. "The Cancer Center even offered me a massage," she said. "They just really took care of me."

She also received nutritional support and other services through the Cancer Resource Center. "I felt pampered all the way. They taught me how to look better while I was going through this process. They provided me with makeup and a wig."

"As a family, we are growing strong in the Lord," she said. "I had to put all my faith in God and be very, very thankful that I have a place where they can help me."

Lupita is very appreciative of the support she received at the Cancer Center, including the fact the staff was available to call if she needed them at any time. "The Cancer Center even offered me a massage," she said. "They just really took care of me."

When asked what advice she would give cancer patients who have been newly diagnosed, she said she learned to take one moment at a time. She said she compared fighting cancer to moving a big mountain. "You're not going to be able to lift that mountain, so you have to move one rock at a time," she said. "What I really cherish, more than everything at the Cancer Center, is everybody's friendship."

She's been very supportive and she keeps track of everything that I need to do next. Lupita compared fighting cancer to moving a big mountain. "You're not going to be able to lift that mountain, so you have to move one rock at a time," she said. "What I really cherish, more than everything at the Cancer Center, is everybody's friendship."

"Thank God, I'm doing much better right now," she said. "I had to put all my faith in God and be very, very thankful that I have a place where they can help me."

"As a family, we are growing strong in the Lord," she said. "I had to put all my faith in God and be very, very thankful that I have a place where they can help me."

"The first thing is to turn fear into faith. And the second thing is to turn your fear into action," Lupita said. "The first thing is to turn fear into faith. And the second thing is to turn your fear into action."
Focusing on Prevention & Screenings

Out of 253 people screened at the breast health station, 11 were identified as potential high risk and 32 were identified as needing mammograms.

Each year, Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center conducts outreach programs to educate our community about various types of cancer, the risk factors involved, prevention strategies and how early detection can improve outcomes for treatment and survival.

For our 2018 outreach efforts, the Cancer Center Cancer Committee chose to focus on breast cancer and colorectal cancer. This decision was made in response to the high incidence of breast cancer we see at the Center and to support our initiative of increasing the number of people being screened for colorectal cancer.

In February, Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center participated in the Boomers & Beyond Living Expo held at the Yuma Civic Center which was attended by more than 800 seniors age 55 and older. The Cancer Center hosted two interactive activities at the event: assessments of breast cancer risk and lifestyle factors that can reduce the risk of developing cancer. Participants were also given the opportunity to interact with an oncology certified nurse to receive answers to their questions about cancer prevention.

Out of 42 attendees who started the breast cancer risk assessment, 30 completed the assessment and 23% were at high risk for breast cancer. Everyone who participated received information and follow-up communication from the Cancer Center.

Cancer Center Medical Director Dr. Abhinav Chanda gave a presentation on the event’s main stage about the importance of prevention and early detection of breast cancer. By becoming educated on the importance of prevention and early detection of breast cancer through mammograms, they can impact their own health and become advocates for breast cancer screenings and education with their patients.

Our community health worker continued our community education throughout the entire year by attending another 39 community events and offering 59 cancer education outreach programs to educate our community, as well as information on how to manage lymphedema. Brochures introducing the Cancer Center to our community, as well as information on cancer support groups, were also distributed as part of our ongoing efforts to reach out to and serve our community.

Increasing Screenings, Saving Lives

In 2014, the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, an organization co-founded by the American Cancer Society and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, launched an initiative titled “80% by 2018.” The goal was to have 80 percent of adults aged 50 and older screened for colorectal cancer by 2018. If this goal could be achieved, they projected, more than 200,000 deaths from colon cancer could be prevented over the next 20 years.

Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center strongly supported this initiative, and in an effort to increase patient education and colon cancer screenings in Yuma County, we formed a partnership with Yuma Regional Medical Center Family Medicine Center.

Screenings can help detect colorectal cancer at an early stage, when treatment has a better chance of being successful. In some cases, this cancer can even be prevented, when precancerous polyps are detected and removed.

Many physicians routinely discuss the importance of a colonoscopy or other methods of colon cancer screening during a patient’s annual physical. But as Joseph Hogue, M.D., M.B.A., associate program director of the Family & Community Medicine Residency Program and associate medical director for the Yuma Regional Medical Center Family Medicine Center, explained, his clinic’s staff is going even further to spread the word.

“I think over the next year, we’re going to see that number increase,” Dr. Hogue said. “We really want our numbers to increase dramatically. Of course, we want to be at 80 percent. That’s our goal. But as long as we continue to improve the number of patients that are screened for colon cancer, we’re moving forward and that’s a good sign.”

“...as long as we continue to improve the number of patients that are screened for colon cancer, we’re moving forward and that’s a good sign.”

― Dr. Hogue

You had your colonoscopy?” said Dr. Hogue. Tracking the exact number of patients who have been screened for colon cancer can be challenging, since the information is not always captured in a single database. This challenge is compounded by the difficulty of gathering accurate data for winter visitors who spend part of the year in our area. But after a considerable effort to update the available data, Dr. Hogue and his team have determined that the clinic is now at a 51 percent patient screening rate. “That’s a big improvement over 32 percent, which is where we were at a year ago,” he said.

“You had your colonoscopy?” said Dr. Hogue. Tracking the exact number of patients who have been screened for colon cancer can be challenging, since the information is not always captured in a single database. This challenge is compounded by the difficulty of gathering accurate data for winter visitors who spend part of the year in our area. But after a considerable effort to update the
She began participating in the clinical trial in July. “They were very thorough, very precise about what it entailed, and very attentive – they made me feel very special,” she said. “That’s the most beautiful thing about the Cancer Center – their compassion and professionalism combined.”

The clinical trial ended in November. Patricia displayed her typical good humor as she moves on to a third treatment. “I feel like Goldilocks. The first treatment was very harsh and the clinical trial wasn’t harsh enough, so the third one’s going to be just right.”

“I am now at stage four,” she explained. “But from a year ago, I can’t tell you how wonderful I feel. The treatment has done something. I don’t know what it is, but whatever it is, I want more of it because I feel so good.”

She said that one day, she even had to take a break after walking rapidly, not because she was out of breath, but because her legs hurt from walking too much.

Patricia is determined to keep a positive attitude. “If your health is precarious, you tend to look for ways to protect it,” she said. “One way she does this is by avoiding the negativity in the news. I get positive affirmations from social media and prayer and read about positivity and how the mind/body connection works.”

She also makes it a point to make people smile or laugh. “If somebody else is laughing I know that I must be smiling. So I practice it and try to feel good every day. It improves the quality of my life instantly.”

“I have been a very strong, independent woman throughout my life,” she continued, “a single parent sometimes, and the struggles have always been there. So this is a different struggle.”

She’s grateful for the support of her daughter, Maria, and son, Armando, as she continues her cancer journey. “I am very fortunate that my kids are behind whatever I choose,” she said, explaining that they were definitely excited about the clinical trial. “We were hopeful, just like we are for all the treatments.”

Patricia’s strength comes through in a sweet story she shared about her daughter. “When she was five years old, she would ride in the back seat and stand right there between the seats. “One day she said to me, ‘Mama, we’re the tough girls and nothing can stop us now!’”

Even tough girls need a helping hand now and then, though, and Patricia is grateful for the care she receives from her longtime friend Martina. She miraculously showed up on Patricia’s doorstep the day of her first treatment “like an angel,” Patricia said, even though she hadn’t told Martina about her diagnosis. “She’s been here since the first day and has seen me through the different changes. She’s an amazing friend.”

Patricia also appreciates the value of being able to receive her treatments right here in her hometown. One day, when visiting the Cancer Center, she met a winter visitor from North Dakota who would normally have to travel 130 miles to visit her cancer center at home. “Some people think you have to travel to Phoenix or Tucson or La Jolla for treatment, but I have never had anything but the best experience here,” Patricia said.

When asked if she was glad she participated in the clinical trial, she said, “Oh, absolutely. And if they were to invite me for a different one, I would definitely do it. For those of us with stage four cancer, we seek our purpose on a daily basis, sometimes hour by hour. I’m embracing my life with this new thing in it. I know that there is no cure for this, but there’s a possibility of remission with quality of life attached to it.”
With great advances continuing to be made in cancer care, it is essential that our Cancer Center not only embrace these advances, but shares our own best practices with other cancer care professionals. One example of how we accomplished this in the past year involves how we treat multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells that can lead to low blood counts, bone and calcium problems, infections and kidney damage.

In 2018, our Cancer Center was honored to be chosen as one of only three cancer centers nationwide to receive a site visit from the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC). The purpose of this visit was to gain a deeper understanding of how this cancer is being managed, to identify effective practices and to foster a network of cancer care professionals dedicated to the treatment of patients with multiple myeloma.

During their visit, ACCC representatives identified a number of ways our Cancer Center works to provide optimal care to patients with multiple myeloma. Some of the practices they noted were:

- Educating patients who have been newly diagnosed with multiple myeloma about the nature of the condition and treatment side effects, as well as assessing caregiver support available to the patient and their home environment.
- Enhancing the care of winter visitors by coordinating their care plans with their home oncologists and by using the Epic Care Everywhere electronic health records system to access and exchange patient records with other hospitals and cancer programs.
- Forming a tumor board consisting of a team of multidisciplinary oncology providers who meet twice a month to discuss specific patient cases, treatment options and how to ensure that patients receive optimal care.
- Providing patients who are candidates for a transplant with a referral to transplant centers, based on their willingness to travel, the availability of social support and health insurance coverage.
- Managing treatment options for patients who have bone lesions, including providing them with radiation therapy to offer pain relief and management of other symptoms.
- Leveraging technology to coordinate patient care, including the tracking of oral chemotherapy adherence.

In October, Cancer Center Medical Director Abhinav Chandra, M.D. presented the Center’s multidisciplinary approach for treating multiple myeloma at the ACCC annual meeting in Phoenix. During his presentation, he shared our best practices with other community cancer centers across the country, so that they may also benefit from what we have learned about treating this type of cancer.

The joint findings of Yuma Regional Medical Center Cancer Center, John Theurer Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack, NJ and Moffit Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida were also published in the ACCC publication, Multidisciplinary Multiple Myeloma Care: Models of Effective Care Delivery.

### 2017 Comparison of Selected Tumor Sites*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Site</th>
<th>YRMC Cases</th>
<th>YRMC Percent</th>
<th>Arizona Cases</th>
<th>Arizona Percent</th>
<th>National Cases</th>
<th>National Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>4,870</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>252,710</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>1,940</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prostate</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>2,990</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>161,360</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorectal</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>135,430</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bladder</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>1,670</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>79,030</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
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<td>LH Lymphoma</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>1,410</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>72,240</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corpus Uteri</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>61,380</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melanoma</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2,050</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>87,110</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leukemia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>62,130</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cervix</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>12,820</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>15,730</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>542,070</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>35,810</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>1,688,780</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</table>

*Estimated numbers of new cases from: The American Cancer Society Cancer Facts & Figures 2017

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 registrars also coordinate the activities of the tumor board, which is composed of physicians with diverse medical expertise, who meet to review patient cases and determine the best course of treatment.