



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

Cataldo Doria, MD, PhD, MBA, FACS
Medical Director, Cancer Center

Rona Remstein, Director, Cancer Center

At Capital Health Cancer Center, we are committed to providing the highest level of care and continue to improve access to specialized programs. In this issue, you will learn about the launch of our Liver Center of Excellence, a multidisciplinary model of care that offers cutting-edge diagnostics and innovative treatment for a full range of malignant and pre-malignant conditions. Patients who receive care through this center have convenient access to their care team and can schedule appointments with their specialists all on the same day, and in the same office, with the goal of establishing a comprehensive and personalized treatment plan.

We are excited to announce that two medical oncology practices with strong ties to Capital Health—Mercer Bucks Hematology Oncology and Mercer County Hematology Oncology—have recently joined Capital Health Medical Group to become Capital Health – Hematology and Oncology Specialists. As a result of this merger, patients who need infusion therapy now receive treatment at the Capital Health Infusion Center, where they benefit from established services such as patient navigators, nurse navigators, nutritionists and social

workers. To accommodate this expansion, the Infusion Center has increased its hours of operation and hired additional staff.

The Cancer Center is planning the second annual conference on cancer, which will take place on March 25 – 26, 2022 at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The conference is geared for physicians, nurses and allied staff and focuses on several important cancer issues, such as lung cancer and the enhanced use of artificial intelligence in cancer care. We are anticipating an intellectually stimulating and inspiring experience for all who attend.

At Capital Health, we work hard every day to ensure you have access to the best medical professionals, treatments, clinical research, and technology to fight cancer, but we recognize that it takes a community to support a mission of excellence. We are pleased to announce that our annual Dr. Abraham George Memorial Golf Tournament raised \$320,000 to support our efforts and helps us continue to be a regional leader in cancer care.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cancer Conference | MARCH 2022

We are proud to be a leader in cancer education for those involved in the diagnosis, treatment and support of cancer patients. Capital Health's Cancer Conference, "Breaking Barriers in Cancer Care," is scheduled for **March 25 – 26, 2022 in Atlantic City, NJ**. The conference is open to physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, residents, and hospital administration. CME/CEU educational credits are available.

For more information, visit
capitalhealth.org/cancerconference.

Cancer Screenings Save Lives

An early cancer diagnosis often means more treatment options and better outcomes. If you've put off a routine cancer screening due to COVID-19, it's time to schedule that appointment. We continue to offer bladder, breast, colorectal, esophageal, lung, pancreas, and prostate cancer screenings. Ask your health care provider about your next screening and share any new symptoms or concerns.





YOUR ACCESS to Health

Our highly skilled physicians and multidisciplinary teams combine their knowledge, experience, and expertise to deliver coordinated, integrative, personalized care. Visit capitalhealth.org/cancer to learn more or to find a doctor that meets your needs.

CANCER CENTER 609.537.6363

SPECIALIZED CENTERS

Capital Institute for
Neurosciences 609.537.7300
Center for Comprehensive
Breast Care 609.537.6767
Center for Digestive Health 609.537.5000
Liver Center of Excellence 888.454.8370
Lung Center 844.303.5864
Sarcoma Center of Excellence 267.339.3662

SCREENING PROGRAMS

Bladder 609.303.4460
Breast 609.394.6695
Colorectal 609.303.4444
Esophageal 609.537.5000
Lung 844.303.5864
Pancreas 609.537.5000
Prostate 609.303.4460

RESOURCES/SERVICES

Central Scheduling 609.394.6695
Cancer Genetics Program 609.537.7043
CyberKnife® Center 609.303.4565
Hematology Oncology 609.303.0747
Oasis Salon and Wellness Spa 609.537.6544
Quit Smoking Program 609.303.5864
Radiation Oncology 609.303.4244
Radiology & Imaging 609.394.6695
Support Groups 609.537.7485
Surgical Group 609.537.6000



Cancer Center **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

The New Jersey State Cancer Registry (NJSCR) recognized Capital Health for meeting its reporting requirements and completeness benchmark of 95% by July 31, 2021. The NJSCR acknowledged this as an “exceptional achievement,” given the impact of COVID-19 on medical facilities.

By law, every hospital in the New Jersey must report all cancer cases, specified tumors, and precancerous diseases to the NJSCR within six months of diagnosis or three months of discharge (whichever is sooner) into a unique medical database.

Cancer registrars work closely with physicians and other health care professionals to document each patient’s history, cancer site, diagnosis stage, treatment, and health status. They review medical records and convert data into standardized registry codes for analysis. On a local and state level, health care leaders use the data to identify cancer clusters and develop new programs and services.

As a member of the National Cancer Institute’s Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) program, NJSCR’s de-identified information enables researchers, health care providers, and public health officials to monitor cancer incidence rates and mortality rates, identify trends, conduct cancer research, and monitor treatment outcomes.

“This recognition is meaningful because our team of certified cancer registrars has never stopped or lost their focus during the pandemic. They successfully met the State of New Jersey’s original reporting deadline — well ahead of the extension granted to other registrars,” said Karen Yacilla, cancer registry supervisor. “We are proud to have received this award in addition to the others received over the years. It is a testament to the commitment of our registrars. They know that the trifecta of quality, completeness, and timeliness are essential to advances in cancer care.”

Congratulations to **KAREN YACILLA** and her team for their exceptional work during these extraordinary times!



Capital Health Research is **ADVANCING CANCER CARE**

Dr. Cataldo Doria, director of the Pancreas Center of Excellence and the medical director of the Capital Health Cancer Center, recently led a study to assess the impact of socioeconomic status and race on clinical outcomes.

According to the American Cancer Society, pancreatic cancer accounts for 60,430 of all new cancer cases annually in the U.S., with a very low 10% five-year relative survival rate after diagnosis. In addition, studies have shown outcomes differ for African Americans compared to other races and ethnicities. Such disparities in outcomes have pointed to modifiable and non-modifiable factors such as tobacco smoking, diabetes, obesity, and genetics – risk factors that tend to be higher among African Americans.

The premise of the study—titled **“Municipality and Adjusted Gross Income Influence Outcome of Patients Diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer in a Newly Developed Cancer Center in Mercer County New Jersey, USA, a Single Center Study”**—was that patients encounter barriers when accessing specialty services at larger academic medical centers and that community cancer centers can play a critical role in providing specialty services. The study’s unique approach used municipality ZIP codes and adjusted gross income to identify differences in race and socioeconomic status (SES) on overall survival for patients. The Capital Health cancer registry provided data on pancreatic cancer patients residing in Mercer County from 1998 until 2018.

Findings confirmed that overall survival was significantly higher for whites and those who lived in a municipality with high SES. A significant non-random distribution was noted between patients who received surgery and race — with 14% of African Americans opting for surgery, compared to 20% of Asians and 29% of whites. Statistically significant differences in race and SES also existed in the type of treatment received — with disparities for those who received radiation therapy and surgery but not chemotherapy.

Significant differences were not detected between race and those diagnosed with pancreatic cancer or receiving chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or palliative care. The tumor stage at the time of diagnosis showed no distinguishable differences.

The study also indicated that patients in lower socioeconomic groups and African Americans had significantly lower overall survival and lower utilization of specialty services, suggesting a lack of access to specific treatment modalities in underserved populations. Because pancreatic surgeries are centralized in major academic medical centers, lack of transportation or medical coverage and the distance traveled to treatment may also be impediments.

The study shows that the key to overcoming these established disparities and improving patient outcomes is the decentralization of pancreatic surgery to community cancer centers that offer the expertise and infrastructure to carry out specialized treatments regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and insurance.



CANCER SUPPORT GROUPS

Healing from a life-changing event isn’t easy, especially on your own. Our support groups are open to anyone diagnosed with a cancer, regardless of where they are receiving treatment.

For more information about the programs or to register, call the numbers shown below or visit capitalhealth.org/events.

BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS • 609.537.7485
— Second Tuesdays | 6 – 7:30 p.m.

— Second Tuesdays | 6 – 7:30 p.m.

PANCREATIC CANCER • 609.303.4068
Third Thursdays | 5 – 6:30 p.m.

BRAIN TUMOR • 609.537.7157
Third Thursdays | 3 – 4:30 p.m.

Capital Health Launches **LIVER CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**

Bringing cutting-edge treatments
and new hope to patients



According to the American Cancer Society, liver cancer rates have more than tripled since 1980, and it estimates that 42,230 new cases of primary liver and intrahepatic bile duct cancer will be diagnosed across the United States in 2021. To address this critical health care need in central New Jersey and the Greater Philadelphia region, Capital Health has launched its Liver Center of Excellence, where patients have access to care delivered by medical experts who are highly experienced in diagnosing and treating a full range of liver diseases. The Center provides cutting-edge treatments and sophisticated technology, all in a state-of-the-art facility that is conveniently located close to home for patients in and around Mercer and Burlington counties in New Jersey and Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

“The Capital Health Liver Center of Excellence is transforming liver care in the region by making comprehensive care and access to experienced physicians close to home,” said Dr. Cataldo Doria, director of the Liver Center of Excellence and medical director of Capital Health Cancer Center. “Our commitment to improving patient outcomes and quality of life drives us to continuously advance care, from skilled talent to cutting edge technology. Because we can diagnose and treat a full range of malignant liver diseases here at Capital Health, patients no longer need to endure the grinding travel and expenses associated with receiving care in cities like Philadelphia and New York.”

To facilitate a rapid evaluation, a multidisciplinary team of medical experts designed a clinic devoted exclusively to liver conditions at Capital Health. This streamlined approach reduces the need for patients to make and manage multiple appointments with different doctors. Patients meet one-on-one with clinicians for a thorough medical assessment after which the team collaborates to provide a diagnosis and recommended course of action that is personalized for each patient.

LIVER CANCER RISK FACTORS

The liver is the body’s largest internal organ and performs many key functions, such as filtering blood, making bile (to help break down food, drugs and fats), producing cholesterol, converting glucose, and processing hemoglobin, among others.

There are risk factors that can increase one’s chances of developing liver cancer. Obesity, heavy alcohol use, smoking, hepatitis B and hepatitis C infections, and liver cirrhosis are proven risk factors. American Cancer Society research shows that approximately 70% of those newly diagnosed with liver and intrahepatic bile duct cancer are male, and people of Asian American or Pacific Islander descent are also at higher risk of developing liver cancer.

DIAGNOSTICS AND TREATMENTS

Through the Liver Center of Excellence, patients have convenient access to the latest in imaging and diagnostic technology and a broad range of treatment options — all conveniently located at Capital Health Medical Center – Hopewell.

Diagnostic Testing

- Ultrasound
- CT
- MRI
- Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA), as well as other tumor marker tests
- Genetic studies
- Personalized medicine
- Liver biopsy
- GI endoscopy (esophagogastroduodenoscopy)
- Endoscopic ultrasound (EUS)
- Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP)
- Cholangioscopy

Treatments

- ... Surgery (liver resections)
- ... Surgical treatment of portal hypertension
- ... Liver transplantation
- ... Interventional liver-directed therapy
- ... CyberKnife® stereotactic body radiation therapy (SRS SBRT)
- ... Chemotherapy
- ... Immunotherapy
- ... Endoscopic therapy

EXPANDING TREATMENT OPTIONS

Capital Health has been at the forefront offering new approaches to treatments not previously available in the region.

Ex-vivo liver resection with liver auto-transplant is for patients who are not candidates for traditional surgery. In this procedure, the liver is taken out of the body to surgically remove the cancer. Then the liver vasculature is reconstructed and a portion of the liver is transplanted back into the patient's body.

Whereas traditional surgery may require 10 or more units of blood, **bloodless liver surgery** employs an ultrasonic device to suction out liver cells, immediately followed by a probe that uses hot, sterile water to seal the liver's blood vessels, significantly reducing a patient's recovery time.

For appropriate candidates, specially trained surgeons perform **minimally invasive robotic-assisted surgery**

using the da Vinci® surgical system to remove the cancer, resulting in smaller incisions, fewer complications, and a faster recovery for patients than traditional open surgery.

TheraSphere™ is a selective internal radiation therapy (SIRT) that uses millions of microscopic glass beads containing radioactive yttrium (Y-90) to deliver radiation directly to cancer cells. It is typically offered on an outpatient basis and administered via catheter through an artery in a patient's leg.

In a **transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS)** procedure, a stent is placed into a liver vein to bypass the liver. This reduces pressure in the portal vein, thus lowering the risk of ruptures and bleeding in enlarged veins.

For patients experiencing enlarged veins (varices) in the esophagus who are not candidates for TIPS or liver transplantation, we also perform **selective and non-selective surgical shunts** to treat these conditions.

COLLABORATIONS ADVANCING OUTCOMES

Patients requiring liver transplants, can now benefit from our affiliation with Temple University Hospital. This arrangement provides easy access to transplant evaluations.

Through our collaboration with the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute, we are expanding our research.

Capital Health makes available clinical trials offered by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), universities and pharmaceutical companies.

MEET THE TEAM



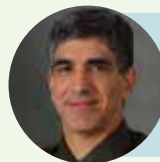
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Medical Director, Capital Health Cancer Center, Hepato-pancreato-biliary Surgery



Hongyan Liang, MD
Capital Health – Hematology Oncology Specialists



Waseem Butt, MD
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Armen J. Simonian, MD
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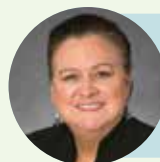
Ajay Choudhri, MD
Chairman and Medical Director, Capital Health Department of Radiology



Jason N. Rogart, MD, FASGE
Director, Interventional Gastroenterology and Therapeutic Endoscopy



Timothy H. Chen, MD
Medical Director, Stereotactic Radiosurgery



Carolyn Gaukler, MD
Director, Supportive Care

CLINICAL TRIALS FOR BRAIN CANCER TREATMENT

Expand at Capital Health

Capital Institute for Neurosciences is proud to have enrolled more patients in the 3D-PREDICT brain cancer clinical trial (sponsored by Kiyatec) than any other site.

"Our goal is to provide exceptional care and treatments specific to each patient diagnosed with brain cancer," said **DR. NAVID REDJAL**, neurosurgeon and director of



Neurosurgical Oncology at Capital Health. "This requires us to be at the forefront of new options and to provide leadership in the broader medical community in bringing the next level of care to patients with brain tumors."

Dr. Navid Redjal was part of a team of physicians from around the country involved in the trial. Their research led to the publication of "Prospective Predication of Clinical Drug Response in High-Grade Gliomas Using an Ex-Vivo 3D Cell Culture Assay" in the June 2021 issue of the *Journal of Neuro-Oncology*. The study was able to demonstrate analytical and clinical outcomes within an actionable timeframe and validated new possibilities to improve care for glioblastoma (GBM) and other

high-grade glioma patients — both highly aggressive, advanced cancers with limited treatment options.

In the trial, different drug therapies were tested on a patient's own biopsy or resected tumor tissue. Within seven to ten days, the study identified which treatment strategies responded best to a specific patient's tissue samples. "The ability to understand responsiveness to different therapeutics is a game changer," said Dr. Redjal. "For each patient, we hope to predict the most effective therapy personalized to the molecular response of their specific tumor—before the patient's first treatment even begins."

As the director Neurosurgical Oncology, Dr. Navid Redjal also runs the program's multi-disciplinary Brain Tumor Clinic, as well as the program's weekly brain tumor board.



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**CAPITAL INSTITUTE
FOR NEUROSCIENCES**



FREE SUPPORT PROGRAM for Newly Diagnosed Patients

The new Peer-to-Peer Connection Support Program at Capital Health Cancer matches patients with volunteer peer mentors who have gone through similar cancers and treatment experiences. It is a free service for those newly diagnosed with cancer and receiving care at Capital Health.

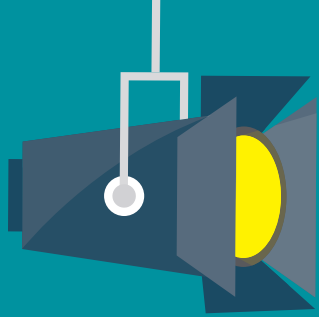
"We created this new program because some patients expressed they didn't feel comfortable joining a support group. Many patients who have been recently diagnosed experience difficulty getting grounded and finding their way forward," said Christian Hong, a licensed clinical social worker at Capital Health Cancer Center. "With this program, we offer a unique and deeply personal way to provide support that helps ease anxieties, fears, and stresses."

Volunteer peer mentors must have completed their cancer treatment at least one year prior to participation in the program. We welcome mentors regardless of



where they have been diagnosed and treated. After an introduction to the program and training, volunteer mentors are matched with patients. Moving forward, each mentor/patient team can then choose how they wish to engage (by phone, face-to-face, or virtually) and how often they'd like to connect. Ongoing guidance will be provided by the program administrator.

For more information about the Cancer Center's Peer-to-Peer Connection Support Program, or to become a volunteer peer mentor, please call 609.537.6363.



SPOTLIGHT ON: NEW NURSE NAVIGATORS

A Progressive Approach for Better Care



There is no doubt that a cancer diagnosis is life altering, causing one's world to change overnight. Some patients even come to define their lives as pre-cancer and post-cancer. It is between these two dimensions where nurse navigators play a pivotal role in bridging the gap.

Since joining the Cancer Center's navigation team, registered nurses **AILEEN DICCIONE**, breast health nurse navigator; **EMILY PARISI**, GYN oncology nurse navigator; **KRISTY FRASCELLA**, GI oncology nurse navigator; **MYRNAIVETTE PIERSON**, thoracic nurse navigator; and **ASHLEY VELLUCCI**, urology nurse navigator at Capital Health – Urology Specialists have been instrumental in helping patients understand their conditions and guiding them on their cancer journey.

HERE FOR YOU

From the moment a cancer diagnosis is made, patient care takes on a sense of urgency for answers and action. There are many complexities to navigate, including complicated health care systems, medical testing and treatments, and even the necessities of managing daily living.

Nurse navigators not only guide patients through huge amounts of information, they are the point people for communicating between physicians and the multidisciplinary care team, coordinating the implementation of each patient's personalized care plan, explaining treatments, and leveraging their vast network to identify additional supportive services.

AN ESSENTIAL ROLE

Oncology nurse navigation is part of the Capital Health Cancer Center, but it is not available everywhere. Capital

Health oncology nurse navigators support patients wherever they are emotionally and clinically — whether it's addressing potential treatment side effects, speaking with family members and caregivers, or removing obstacles to treatment so that the patient can focus on regaining their health.

Patient engagement is at the heart of the job. Navigators usually meet patients during chemotherapy sessions or physician visits, to check-in and address any concerns or changes in treatment throughout the patient's journey. These nurse navigators also play an important role in community outreach and education initiatives, providing prevention tips, screening guidelines, and risk factors for different cancers.

PATIENT FOCUS

"Between the increase in the number of patients choosing Capital Health instead of the larger, Philadelphia-based hospitals and the Cancer Center's expanding expertise in site-specific cancers, it made sense to add these outstanding nurse navigators to our multidisciplinary teams," said Trish Tatrai, manager Oncology Support Services/Breast Navigator, who also oversees the navigation team. "Patients appreciate having a go-to person to guide and advocate for them when they are not feeling up to it."

Capital Health is continually evaluating how it can improve the patient experience and clinical outcomes. Adding site-specific oncology nurse navigators is just one of the ways it is meeting these goals. Because at the end of the day, it is about improving the lives of patients.



Hope is in the bag

The Rothwell family
and Pennington Quality

Market hosted a one-day shopping event and donated 5% of the day's proceeds to Capital Health's Center for Comprehensive Breast Care. This marks the seventh consecutive year for Hope is in the Bag, highlighting the importance of the early detection of breast cancer while raising funds for the women and men who receive care at the Center. Many thanks for your support.

— Hope and Comfort —

A special thank you to Melissa's Brigade of Mercer County for donating comfort packages to patients at Capital Health Cancer Center. Lawrenceville resident Melissa McCormack started the Brigade during her cancer journey as a way to comfort cancer patients and show them there are people who care. Today, the organization continues that mission in memory of Melissa. The gift baskets have items a patient might need during chemotherapy treatments. We appreciate Melissa's Brigade for continuing its founder's compassionate work.

GOLF TOURNAMENT IS A SUCCESS



On Wednesday, June 9, Capital Health held its annual Dr. Abraham George Memorial Golf Tournament at Mercer Oaks Golf Course in West Windsor, New Jersey. More than \$320,000 was raised to benefit The Campaign for Capital Health and Capital Health's Cancer Center. Resources directed to the campaign will enable the expansion of clinical, educational, and research initiatives and enhance critical support services for cancer patients and their families. For more information, please contact Capital Health's Office of Development at 609.303.4121 or hkearnslatini@capitalhealth.org.



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