



July 2023

## Celebrating Survivorship! Cancer Survivor's Day



The Cancer Center team hosted a celebration of Cancer Survivor's Day on Sunday, June 4, at the Easton Volunteer Fire Department. The event included a luncheon and BINGO with prizes - gift cards from the Avalon Foundation, Dairy Queen, Hot off the Coals BBQ, Bay Country Bakery and Fisherman's Inn; and an afternoon for two at Layton's Chance Vineyard. Cancer Center team members also donated prizes – a “Stronger than cancer” t-shirt, two blankets, various gift cards (Subway, Applebee's, Olive Garden, Michael's and Panera) and a variety of personal care and household items. A good time was had by all, and plans are already in the works for next year's celebration!

---

## UM SMG -Women's Health Welcomes Gynecologic Oncologist from UM School of Medicine



UM Shore Medical Group-Women's Health recently welcomed **Abbie L. Fields, MD** (*shown at left*), a leading gynecologic oncologist with UM School of Medicine.

Dr. Fields has more than 32 years of experience in the field of gynecologic oncology. Board certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, she also holds a sub-specialty certification in gynecologic oncology. Most recently, she was the Director of Gynecologic Oncology in the Pelvic Reconstruction and Complex Gynecologic Surgery Department at LifeBridge Health-Sinai Hospital in Baltimore. She also previously served as Medical Director of Gynecologic Oncology at the Washington Cancer Institute in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Fields received her Doctor of Medicine from Ohio State University's College of Medicine. She completed her residency in obstetrics and

gynecology at Northwestern University in Chicago and her fellowship in gynecologic oncology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore.

Dr. Fields sees patients at the Easton-based Women's Health practice at 522 Idlewild Avenue. For questions, please call UM Shore Medical Group-Women's Health, 410-820-4888.

---

## Radiation Oncology Team Welcomes New Scanner



The Cancer Center's Radiation Oncology team welcomed the arrival of the new Siemen's SOMATOM go.Open Proscanner in late May. According to **John Mastandrea, MD** (*above left*), Chief Radiation Oncologist, UM Shore Medical Group – Radiation Oncology, and **Rashmi Benda, MD** (*above right*), Medical Director of the Requard Radiation Center and Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology, UM School of Medicine, the new scanner offers significant advantages, including faster image delivery and improved image quality.

---

## New Mammography Machine “Up and Running” at Leh Women’s Center in Chestertown



*Shown at left during a “pink ribbon-cutting ceremony” in April celebrating the installation of the new, state-of-the art mammography machine in the Leh Women’s Center are Lara Wilson, Director, Rural Health Care Transformation at UM Shore Medical Center Chestertown; mammography technologists Jordan Boone and Abby Spence, lead mammography technologist Connie Branham; mammography technologist Susan Herr; Penny Olivi, Director, Imaging Services, UM SRH; and Dennis Welsh, Vice President, Rural Health Care Transformation and Executive Director, UM Shore Medical Center at Chestertown.*



A new, state-of-the-art Senographe Pristina 3D mammography machine with tomosynthesis is the most recent addition to the Eleanor and Ethel Leh Women's Center at UM Shore Medical Center at Chestertown. Designed by women, for women, this new equipment offers a more comfortable mammogram experience, with better positioning and compression that provides better image quality and reduces the need for repeat imaging.

"The Leh Women's Center has paved the way in cutting-edge mammography technology on the Eastern Shore," said **Connie Branham, RT (R), (M), CN-B**, Lead Mammography Technologist at the Leh Center. "Early detection is key. My own breast cancer was found early thanks to mammography. I am also fortunate in that my entire breast cancer team is all within Shore Regional Health."

Branham and the rest of the mammography team have achieved advanced certification. To schedule a mammogram at the Leh Women's Center (or any SRH Diagnostic and Imaging location), request a screening mammogram order from your primary care or women's health provider for a screening mammogram order and then call Central Scheduling, 443-225-7474 to schedule your appointment.

---

## Renee Tyler, LCSW-C, Joins Social Work Team



The Cancer Center welcomed **Renee Tyler, LCSW-C** (*shown at left*), to the Oncology Social Work Department.

Tyler joined the Cancer Center team after two decades as Director of Social Work at Mallard Bay in Cambridge. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Washington College in Chestertown, Md., and a Master of Science in Social Work from Salisbury University in Salisbury, Md.

"We are pleased to have Renee on board with us, given her broad and in-depth experience in the health care environment," said **Patty Plaskon, PhD, LCSW-C, OSW-C, APHSW-C**, Outpatient Oncology Social Work Coordinator. "She started with a focus on radiation oncology patients and is assuming more responsibilities over time."

---

## Local Cancer Caregiver Wins Respite Award - with Fast Cars!

**Aubrey Martin**, 27, is a patient in treatment at the Cancer Center for melanoma. Throughout her health ordeal, her husband **Drew Martin** has been by her side. Married six years ago, the Martins have two children – ages four and two. Drew, who attends the Cancer Center's monthly support group, has been working to support the family, and Aubrey says he's a super dad; however, he was experiencing what she calls "scan-xiety" due to her many health tests, and she wanted a way to thank him and give him a break from his caregiving responsibilities.

Oncology Social Work Coordinator **Patty Plaskon** connected Aubrey with the Maryland-based nonprofit organization Caring On (<https://caringon.org/>), which works to provide respite experiences for caregivers around the state. Aubrey wrote a nomination for Drew describing him as an exceptional caregiver, both at home and as an active and supportive member of the Cancer Caregivers Support Group. Caring On awarded Drew, a fast car enthusiast, a trip to Chicago over the first July weekend to watch a NASCAR street race -- with Aubrey by his side.


"What a blessing to know that an organization exists here in Maryland to help deserving caregivers by providing them an opportunity to do something they enjoy," said Plaskon. "The Caring On team works to give the best experience for caregivers so they can 'relax, refresh, and renew.'"



---


## It's That Time of Year: Summer Sun and Skin Cancer

**DID YOU KNOW?**




**1 IN 5**

Skin cancer is common: 1 in 5 people in the United States will be **diagnosed with skin cancer** in his or her lifetime.




**20**

Nearly 20 people in America die **every day** from melanoma.



**UVA**


UVA rays can cause wrinkles, age spots and sagging, and may also cause some **skin cancers**.



Wearing **sunscreen helps scatter, reflect or absorb sunlight, which can help prevent skin damage from both types of UV rays.**


**UVB rays cause sunburns as well as some skin cancers.**

**It's the most common type of cancer diagnosed in the U.S.**




**2%**

While accounting for about 2% of skin cancer diagnoses, **melanoma** is the most dangerous form of skin cancer because of its ability to spread.



**15 MIN**

UVA (long-wave) and UVB (short-wave) rays in sunlight can **damage your skin** with as little as 15 minutes of exposure.



**UV**

Skin cancer is **preventable**: Almost all forms of skin cancer are caused by ultraviolet (UV) light damage, which can be found in sunlight, tanning booths and sun lamps.

**SKIN CANCER TYPES** - Three most common types of skin cancer are: *basal cell carcinoma* - forms in the basal layer of your skin (very common); *squamous cell carcinoma* - forms in the squamous layer of your skin (very common); and *melanoma* - begins in the melanocytes (common), high potential for metastases

**MELANOMA SYMPTOMS** – One or more of the following warrant attention from a health care provider:

- A - Asymmetrical (irregular shape with parts that look different)
- B - Border (jagged and irregular borders)
- C - Color (uneven color)
- D - Diameter (larger than the size of a pea)
- E - Evolving (changes in the last weeks to month)

**PREVENTION** - Stay in the shade when possible ... Wear sunglasses and a hat that shades your face, head, ears & neck ... Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF or 15 or higher!

---

## Help Spread the Word: Breast Health Care and Screenings

As Community Health Outreach Coordinator for the Clark Comprehensive Breast Center, Catalina Billings (*shown at right*) is seeking venues and groups in the Mid-Shore region willing to host informational presentations about breast health and breast cancer screenings that all women and their loved ones can benefit from. These presentations can be offered in Spanish as well as English.

**Would your church, club, group or community organization be a possibility?** If so, you can reach Catalina by calling 410-820-9400, option 5, or emailing [Catalina.billings@umm.edu](mailto:Catalina.billings@umm.edu)





## Support Update

*By Patty Plaskon, PhD, LCSW-C, OSW-C, APHSW-C  
Outpatient Oncology Social Work Coordinator  
410-820-6800, pplaskon@umm.edu*

**People often ask me, “What actually goes on in your support group?” My answer: “Mostly listening, laughter, a little advice.”**

That being said, I probably shouldn’t downplay “a little advice.”

To some of our attendees, the best advice they have ever gotten about a situation came from another cancer patient in group who has truly been “in their shoes.” It may not have been given as straight-out advice, but from listening to another group member’s experience or gaining perspective from a response someone made to another person.

As a specific example, one member might mention that he or she is disrupted -- everything from too many thoughts running through your head to too many urges to go to the bathroom, from trouble getting comfortable to trouble from side effects of steroids. Everyone is interested and listens, then they may share what worked for them and suggest ways to talk about it with the doctor. Sometimes that means making a list of what you already tried, keeping a log to report sleep patterns more accurately to the doctor, or asking about non-pharmaceutical options if you’re against “taking more pills.”

During the next meeting, we celebrate when someone reports a good outcome. It is a feel-good moment. Or if they say they found the real root of their sleeping problem was their snoring spouse, we all share a good laugh. Laughter and camaraderie are amazingly healing.



**I should also emphasize that support group discussions are not limited to cancer and cancer symptoms, treatments and side effects.** We talk about work issues or family events – and share about things like hobbies or special interests that make you still YOU, not just a cancer patient. There are a few things we are careful to avoid -- we don’t discuss politics and we don’t berate others or belittle anyone’s feelings. And we do not share others’ health information or experiences outside our group!

### **When, where and how to participate:**

- The CARES (CAnceR REcovery & Support) Patient support group meets the first and third Thursday each month, 5-7 pm at the Cancer Center, as well as “live” online. To join either format, contact me as above.
- The Caregiver Support group meets at the Cancer Center, on the first Saturday of the month, 9-10:30 am, and “live” online. To join either format, contact me as above.
- We can also provide linkage to cancer-specific support, on-line groups, or matching with a trained mentor; if interested, contact me as above.

### **ACS GRANT FUNDS TRANSPORTATION FOR CANCER PATIENTS IN NEED**

The Cancer Program received grant funding from the American Cancer Society (ACS) in the amount of \$3,000 for a one-year period to help patients in need with financial assistance for transportation to and from treatment. These funds became available April 1, 2023.

**The funding enables us to help patients facing transportation barriers and unusual costs involved in travel for their treatment.** The Cancer Center’s receptionist, social worker and nurse navigator work with other UMMS facilities and transportation providers when patients face complicated treatment schedules or a lack of resources. The grant helps us find creative solutions for those situations on a case-by-case basis; for information about how to obtain funds to help pay for transportation for your cancer treatment, please contact me, as above.

Social work also recently updated a detailed summary of various public and private transportation services. To receive copy of this summary, contact [pplaskon@umm.edu](mailto:pplaskon@umm.edu)

## BACK ON THE “ROAD TO RECOVERY” WITH ACS

The American Cancer Society’s Road to Recovery program is once again up and running in our area, after a hiatus due to COVID-19. Through this program, cancer patients in need of transportation for oncology appointments or treatments are matched with volunteer drivers who provide transport free of charge. ACS is also always looking for more volunteer drivers; to learn more, visit this link: [Road To Recovery \(cancer.org\)](https://www.cancer.org)

---



### Survivorship Update

*By Rochalla Jones, BSN, RN  
Oncology Nurse Navigator  
410-822-1000, ext. 5096, [rochalla.jones@umm.edu](mailto:rochalla.jones@umm.edu)*

The Cancer Center’s Survivorship Program is here to support you on your path of healing, recovery and wellness. We focus on helping you with side effects of your cancer and treatment; monitoring for recurrent cancer and screening for new cancer; and reducing the risk of cancer recurrence through the adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviors.

Survivorship Oncology Nurse Navigators understand that physical, mental and emotional effects of cancer can last beyond treatment, so we work with patients all along the cancer journey to find ways to reduce and/or manage these effects to improve their quality of life.

***What can we help you with?*** Here are some examples:

Body image  
Sexual dysfunction  
Bowel and/or bladder dysfunction  
Fatigue and/or weakness  
Pain  
Sleep problems  
Shortness of breath

Chemo brain - memory loss, cognitive issues  
Depression, anxiety  
Fear of cancer recurrence  
Swelling in arms, legs (lymphedema)  
Numbness, weakness or pain in arms, legs  
(peripheral neuropathy)  
Speech, swallowing, eating problems

If you are experiencing any of these issues (or others not listed above), please contact me as above. There are many resources available and I am here to help!

## LOOKING AHEAD ...

Some new initiatives are now in the works for this fall. The Mums sale will be back, and we are working on the creation of a full-day event under the umbrella of the Cancer Recovery and Support (CARES) program. Keep your eye out for updates on the SRH Facebook page, <https://web.facebook.com/shoreregionalhealth>

---



### Clinical Trials Update

*By Nina Weisenborn, BSN, RN, OCN®, CCRC  
Clinical Research Nurse  
410-822-1000 ext. 2300, [CWeisenborn@umm.edu](mailto:CWeisenborn@umm.edu)*

The Cancer Program is a partner in advancing the understanding and treatment of cancer through clinical trials and research studies of cancer patients. The goal of these studies is to find the best ways to treat, diagnose and prevent cancer so that people can live better and longer.



At present, we are excited that 15 clinical trials are in progress, enrolling more than 47 of our patients. These trials are available to qualifying patients with breast, colon, lung, endometrial, prostate and oropharynx cancer.

Shore's clinical trials investigators are: oncologists **Adam Goldrich, MD** and **Benjamin Bridges, MD**; urologist **John Foley, MD**; breast care provider **Jo-Ayne Kerry Turner, NP**, and radiation oncologists **John Mastandrea, MD** and **Rashmi Benda, MD**.

Our Clinical Trials Program also has three national cooperative group affiliations, as follows:

- The ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group, <https://ecog-acrin.org/>
- The Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology, <https://www.allianceforclinicaltrialsinoncology.org/>
- NRG Oncology, <https://www.nrgoncology.org/>

If you are interested in learning more about Clinical Trials, please call or email me, as above.

---

*Thriving & Surviving is published twice annually on behalf of the Cancer Program at UM Shore Regional Health.*

*If you have questions about cancer care or support services offered through the Cancer Program, please contact Jeanie Scott, Director, Oncology Services, [escott@umm.edu](mailto:escott@umm.edu) or 410-820-6800.*