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Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center Annual Report

2016

2017

The Smarter Ehreice for Ears.



## Mission

Middlesex Hospital exists to provide the safest, highest-quality care and the best experience possible for the community.

## **Vision**

To be the clear, first choice for medical care.

## **Values**

Pursue excellence.
Uphold honesty.
Cooperate and collaborate.
Support innovation.
Deliver compassionate care.



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## **Accreditations**

#### **Cancer Center**

American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer 2015-2018

National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers 2015-2018

American College of Radiology - Department of Radiation Oncology | 2014-2017

## **Department of Radiology**

American College of Radiology

ACR Breast Imaging Center of Excellence 2015-2018

### **Middlesex Hospital**

Magnet Hospital 2015 - 2018

The Joint Commission 2015 - 2018

## **Cancer Committee (FY2015)**

Andrea Malon, MD - Chair
Edward Aribisala, MS(Engr.), MBA
Gean Brown, RN
Meghan Burgess, APRN
Melanie Cama, RN
Katharine Conroy
Doreen Gagnon, LCSW
Amanda Hamblett, CGC
Gary Havican, FACHE
Susanna Hong, MD
Barton Kenney, MD
Anwar Khan, MD
Elizabeth Mariano, MD

Kathleen Mitchell, CTR
Edward Myer, MD
Deborah Pantalena, RN
Camille Servodidio, RN
Timothy Siegrist, MD
Beth Slifer, CCRP
Craig Walden, MD
Nathan Walk, MD
Joseph Weissberg, MD
Robert Wolek, MD
William Zeidler, MD
Kim Ziolkowski, CTR

## **Our Future**

When referencing cancer care, physicians, nurses, and administrators alike often refer to the continuum of care—the entire spectrum of prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, supportive care, and survivorship. What is mentioned less often is the continuum of time—that everything we do in our present is based upon our past, which lays the foundation for our future.

In 2015, the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center's commitment to past, present, and future was affirmed when it received the Commission on Cancer's Outstanding Achievement Award. The Commission on Cancer, a program of the American College of Surgeons, is a nationally recognized accrediting body that sets forth a series of standards that create a framework for the provision of high-quality, evidence-based, and innovative patient-centered cancer care. Receiving accreditation from the Commission on Cancer indicates that a facility is fully committed to providing not only the best possible clinical care, but to valuing the patient as a whole person. It also signifies an ability to adapt to the challenges of the ever-changing health care environment while putting the patient first.

The Outstanding Achievement Award is granted to the select few programs that both achieve commendation in the eight eligible standards and that meet and exceed each of the forty-six total standards. In 2015, the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center was one of just fifty programs in the United States to receive this honor.

And yet, the Cancer Center team recognizes that there is always more work to do. Our re-accreditation indicates that we have maintained the solid foundation upon which we are building the future of our program. Innovation is in our DNA, and we strive each day to provide safer, higher-quality care and a better patient experience than the day before.

Our 2015 Annual Report—Our Foundation, Our Future—highlights the work of the past year and provides a glimpse into the exciting year to come in 2016.

# **Our Foundations**

### **Programs & Pathways**

## Middlesex Hospital Comprehensive Breast Center

#### **Foundation**

2015 was a year of growth and programmatic success for the Middlesex Hospital Comprehensive Breast Center (CBC). This was highlighted by the achievement of the National Accreditation Program for Breast Center's (NAPBC) three-year re-accreditation, which is awarded to those programs that meet twenty-eight stringent standards for provision of services along the breast cancer continuum. The Comprehensive Breast Center not only received re-accreditation with no deficiencies but was identified by the surveyor as having six best-practice level processes (see below).

## 2015: Year in Review Providers

In 2015, the CBC was fortunate to welcome two new team members. Leah Bassin, MD joined the team of surgical oncologists at the Middlesex Hospital Surgical Alliance. A fellowship-trained breast surgeon who specializes in oncoplastics for lumpectomy patients, Dr. Bassin brings expertise in caring for patients with both benign and malignant diseases of the breast. She is working closely with Andrea Malon, MD, FACS, of the Middletown Surgical Group, to ensure that breast patients are seen as quickly and locally as possible. The CBC also welcomed Kari Mayorga, BSN, RN, OCN as the Breast Imaging Nurse Navigator. Kari is based in the Middlesex Hospital Department of Radiology, where she supports patients in need of breast imaging or biopsies, through education and care coordination. Kari also serves as a liaison to patients' physicians and the Breast Cancer Nurse Navigator.

Additionally, eleven of the Cancer Center's thirteen nurses are Oncology Certified Nurses, and three have either dual or triple certifications.

#### **Technology**

In 2015, the Comprehensive Breast Center introduced tomosynthesis (3D Digital Mammography) and became the first hospital in Connecticut to offer Molecular Breast Imaging.

#### Quality

In compliance with NAPBC requirements, and in line with the CBC's ongoing commitment to continually improving patient care, two studies of quality were completed in 2015. One study, *Compliance with Bone Density Testing for Patients Prescribed Aromatase Inhibitors*, was presented at the Connecticut Research Alliance Meeting and the Oncology Nursing Society Annual Congress.

#### Community

The CBC team hosted and/or attended eighteen breast-specific outreach events, reaching more than 1,600 community members through programs such as the Breast Health Road Show (photo page 23). Breast health information was available at a total of thirty-five events attended by more than 3,300 people.

The Comprehensive Breast Center also continued to actively pursue grant funding to support outreach, screening, and patient care initiatives.

#### **Future**

The CBC's third consecutive NAPBC reaccreditation is a testament to an ongoing commitment to excellence. The work completed in 2015 laid the foundation for continued growth in 2016, which will focus on expansion of the Hereditary Risk Assessment Program, increasing grant funding, providing services to a greater number of patients, and utilizing Quality Improvement initiatives to impact care and educate providers.

### **NAPBC** Best Practices

The NAPBC identified the Comprehensive Breast Center has having six best practices in the field of breast cancer.

- Patient Navigation
- Nursing
- Support and Rehabilitation
- Genetic Evaluation and Management
- Breast Cancer Survivorship Care
- Education, Prevention, and Early Detection Programs

Recognizing that a diagnosis of prostate, bladder, kidney, or testicular cancer impacts each person differently, the Comprehensive Prostate & Urology Program team takes a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to the treatment and support of patients with a urologic cancer. The physicians at Middlesex Urology Associates work closely with the oncologists and our Nurse Navigator, who is active in providing education and care coordination to help patients and their families navigate the range of treatment options available. The Urology Working Group meets regularly to evaluate the program and ensure that patients have access to the highest quality diagnostic, treatment, and support services.

### 2015: Highlights

#### **Technology**

Early in 2015, Middlesex Hospital installed and rolled out the UroNav MRI-Guided Prostate Biopsy system, which "fuses" traditional



ultrasound and 3-Tesla MRI images to guide precision biopsies of the prostate. The combination images present a much clearer picture of the prostate, allowing physicians to better target their biopsies, which reduces patient pain and stress, and to more easily detect aggressive cancers. The use of the UroNav system has been very well received.

#### **Community**

The Comprehensive Prostate & Urology Program continued a strong tradition of community outreach and education in 2015, reaching more than 2,300 people at a range of events. The Nurse Navigator hosted a Prostate Cancer Support Group for Women, intended to help the wives and partners of prostate cancer patients better understand post-prostatectomy side effects.

Additionally, the 5th Annual Men's Health & Wellness Clinic (photo page 23) provided clinical services, cancer screenings, and education to underserved and uninsured men living in the greater-Middletown community. A total of 104 community members accessed these services, which included primary care, podiatry, PSA/DRE prostate cancer screening, testicular cancer screening, blood pressure testing, lung cancer risk assessment, dental care, and more. Community agencies in attendance included the Cancer Center, Community Health Center, and Gambling and Addiction Services.

### **Programs & Pathways**

Middlesex Hospital Comprehensive Prostate & Urology Programs

## Cancer Care Best Practices: Nurse Navigation

Each of the Cancer Center's cancer site pathways has a Nurse Navigator who coordinates and organizes the related programs and processes. At the 2015 Commission on Cancer accreditation visit, the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center's Nurse Navigation program was identified as an area of excellence within our program, counting it as a national best practice in patient navigation. This is a testament to the commitment and dedication of our navigators, who work tirelessly to provide patient education, care coordination, referrals to supportive services, and boundless compassion and support for patients and their families.



# Programs & Pathways

Middlesex Hospital Total Lung Care Center

#### **Foundation**

The Middlesex Hospital Total Lung Care Center team is steadfast in its commitment to provide exemplary care across the continuum of lung cancer, from screening for precancerous nodules to administering treatment and supportive services for patients with all stages of lung cancer.

#### 2015: Year in Review

#### **Total Lung Care Center Team**

The Total Lung Care Center comprises a multidisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, supportive care providers, and administrators, who work together to provide programmatic oversight as well as clinical care. In 2015, this team expanded to include a provider working group to streamline lung cancer diagnostic processes and improve patient outcomes.

The Lung Nurse Navigator, who achieved her Oncology Nurse Certification in 2015, continues to provide care coordination and education for patients diagnosed with lung cancer. This is done in part by service as a clinic nurse in the Surgical Alliance, providing support to the thoracic oncologists. In October 2015, Alicia McKelvey, MD joined this practice, replacing John Federico, MD, to deliver specialized surgical services on site at Middlesex.

#### **Lung Cancer Screening**

The Lung Nurse Navigator also coordinates the Lung Cancer Surveillance program, through which patients with suspicious nodules can access ongoing screening and support to ensure the earliest possible detection of a malignancy. Screening takes places using a low-dose CT scan, which can detect cancers before patients experience physical symptoms.

In 2014, low-dose screening CT scans, which are used for early detection of lung cancer, were approved for coverage by both private insurers and Medicaid. As a result, the Total Lung Care team worked diligently to educate the community—including physicians and the public—about this policy change and the benefits of the screening tests.

The program continues to expand rapidly, with 264 new patients being screened in 2015.

#### **Community**

Beyond physician education, the staff of the Total Lung Care Center, led by the Nurse Navigator, has a strong presence in the community, participating in such events as the Cancer Center's annual Prevention Day and Men's Health & Wellness Event. The TLCC also hosts the Honoring Veterans Lung Cancer Screening Event and the Shine a Light on Lung Cancer Vigil.



## **Commendation: Oncology Nursing**

The Commission on Cancer requires that oncology nursing care - by navigators and nurses in clinical settings - is provided by nurses with specialized knowledge and skills. The specifications given highlight the importance of continuing nursing education and nursing competencies, which are evaluated annually. The Cancer Center received commendation in the oncology nursing standard because more than 25% of our nursing staff is certified in oncology and all nurses demonstrate a high level of expertise in their area while continually expanding their nursing knowledge.

Oncology nursing care is provided by professionals in diverse settings at Middlesex, including the Cancer Center, Radiation Oncology, Medical Oncology, Surgical Oncology, Inpatient Oncology, and Outpatient Infusion. All of these nurses are considered under the oncology nursing standard.

The Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center programs for patients with GYN and colon cancers emphasize the importance of multidisciplinary care. The GYN and Colon Nurse Navigator provides extensive care coordination for those men and women with either diagnosis, working closely with the GYN surgical oncologists at the Surgical Alliance and the physicians at Middlesex Gastroenterology Associates. The Nurse Navigator also serves as a clinic nurse in the Surgical Alliance, further increasing continuity of care for patients.

#### 2015: Highlights

### **Volumes & Technology**

In 2015, Middlesex Hospital saw 57 cases of gynecologic cancer, including malignancies of the ovaries, uterus, cervix, and endometrium. For a number of reasons, including the presence of three specialized GYN surgical oncologists practicing at the Surgical Alliance, the program saw a decrease in outmigration, from eight cases in 2014 to just three cases in 2015.

The implementation of the High Dose Rate (HDR) Brachytherapy program for treatment of GYN cancers also contributed to the decrease in patient outmigration.

Colon cancer remained one of the

top five most common sites seen at Middlesex, and there was also a decrease in outmigration of colon cancer patients.

#### **Community**

The GYN and Colon Nurse Navigator maintains a strong commitment to community outreach and education, especially given the ever-growing body of knowledge about prevention and screening for GYN and colon cancers.

In March of 2015, the Nurse Navigator, in conjunction with the Oncology Dietitian, hosted the annual Nutrition/Colon event, which featured five presentations on the continuum of colon cancer care and the importance of a balanced diet in cancer prevention.

Additionally, in the fall of 2015, the Nurse Navigator collaborated with public health students at Middlesex Community College, attending the health fair they hosted to dispense information about the human papilloma virus (HPV) and the related vaccine. Of particular importance at this event was speaking to college-aged males, who are often unaware of their potential role in spreading HPV. Sixty five students were reached during the health fair.

# Programs & Pathways

Comprehensive
Gynecologic & Colon
Cancer Programs



### Community

The Colon Cancer Alliance's Giant Inflatable Colon was at Prevention Day 2015. This evidence-based educational tool educates visitors about various types of colon cancer and how they affect the body. Ryan O'Connor, MD, of Middlesex Gastroenterology Associates, was on hand to answer questions.

#### **Clinical Services**

## Surgical Alliance & Surgical Oncology

#### Surgical Alliance

The Middlesex Hospital Surgical Alliance is a practice of highly-specialized oncologic surgeons, who afford patients access to the highest-quality, most technologically advanced, multidisciplinary surgical oncology care close to home.

#### 2015: Highlights

#### **Facilities**

As a result of the continuous growth of the clinic, the Surgical Alliance moved offices within the 540 Building at the Outpatient Center on Saybrook Road. The new office suite was renovated especially for the Surgical Alliance, which now has more space and new, up-to-date exam rooms. In addition to promoting a better patient experience, the larger office also allows the Breast Nurse Navigator and GYN/Colon Nurse Navigator, who both work as Surgical Alliance clinic nurses, to more easily collaborate with the physicians.

#### **Physicians and Staff**

In the summer of 2015, the Surgical Alliance was fortunate to welcome Leah Bassin, MD to the practice. Dr. Bassin, who is based at Hartford Hospital, is a board-certified, fellowship-trained breast surgery specialist. She cares for patients with both benign and malignant breast conditions and has particular expertise in oncoplastic surgery. She will be working closely with Andrea Malon, MD, FACS to meet the needs of breast cancer patients in the greater-Middletown community.

Also in 2015, with the departure of John Federico, MD, the Surgical Alliance hired Alicia McKelvey, MD, a board-certified, fellowship-trained thoracic surgery specialist. Dr. McKelvey, who also performs daVinci Robot-Assisted Thoracic Surgery, provides services to patients with cancers of the lung and chest cavity. She brings extensive experience to the team and was essential to a seamless transition in Surgical Alliance physicians.

#### **Surgical Oncology Services**

Middlesex Hospital works closely with a number of general surgeons, who provide comprehensive diagnostic and treatment-related surgical services. With their extensive experience and expert skill, these doctors care for patients with cancers of the breast, colon, rectum, prostate, bladder, kidney, and more. Many are trained in daVinci Robot-Assisted Surgery, as well. The practices that collaborate most frequently with Middlesex include the Middletown Surgical Group, Shoreline Surgical Associates, Middlesex Urology Group, and Southern New England Ear, Nose, and Throat Group.

The Middlesex Hospital Department of Radiation Oncology offers the most advanced radiation therapies for the treatment of cancer, with highly-skilled, board certified physicians working with an exemplary team of nurses, radiation therapists, and physicists to provide comprehensive, individualized treatment in a caring, compassionate setting.

### 2015: Year in Review

#### **Clinical Services**

While continuing to provide a full complement of radiation therapies, in 2015 the department extended its use of Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT), a method of radiation that is extremely targeted and can be delivered through a limited number of treatments. SBRT is now available at Middlesex not only to treat lung cancer, but to treat adrenal, pancreatic, kidney, spinal, and liver cancers, as well.

#### **Patient Support**

The Department of Radiation Oncology team continued to provide support to patients beyond the traditional treatment. Patients living on the shoreline, who do not have access to transportation, can utilize a bus service, free of charge, made available through St. Luke's Community Services. In 2015, a total of 295 transports took place over 162 days, at a total cost to the department of \$31,600.

#### **Staffing**

With patient volumes continuing to increase, the Department of Radiation Oncology added additional nursing hours for continuity of care, as well as a Patient Care Technician position. The Patient Care Technician assists with both nursing and administrative tasks.

Additionally, a new Radiation Therapist joined the team, as another technician departed for a new position.

Radiation Oncology staff were also active in the community, participating in such events as the Men's Health & Wellness Day, Women's Health Conference,

Prevention Day, Survivors Day, and After the Storm's annual Art Bra Event.

#### **Future**

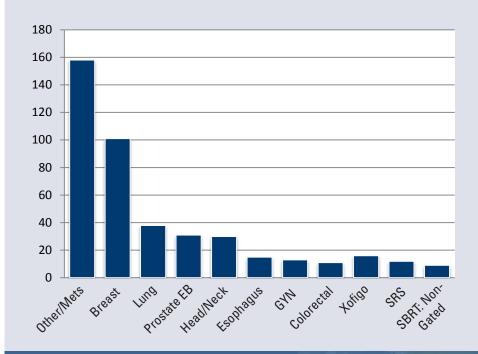
In the fall of 2015, the Department of Radiation Oncology implemented its High Dose Rate Brachytherapy program for the treatment of gynecologic cancers. New equipment was purchased to make possible the administration of this treatment modality, and all of the radiation therapists underwent extensive training how to deliver the treatment.

The Radiation Oncology team also continued to prepare for accreditation through the American Society of Radiation Oncology; the full application will be submitted in the fall of 2016.

#### **Clinical Services**

## Department of Radiation Oncology

## **Radiation Oncology Volumes by Site: FY 2015**



# Cancer Care Best Practices: Radiation Oncology

The Department of Radiation Oncology was cited as an area of excellence for achieving and maintaining accreditation through the American College of Radiology's Radiation Oncology Practice Accreditation Program. This affirms the department's commitment to providing exemplary care through clinical excellence and patient safety.



#### **Clinical Services**

## Medical Oncology: Connecticut Oncology Group

#### **Foundation**

Founded in 1977 by Dr. James E. Brown, Connecticut Oncology Group (COG) provides comprehensive care for patients with hematology (diseases of the blood) or oncology (cancer) diagnoses. Located within the heart of the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center and in Centerbrook, COG provides the most effective cancer treatments with warm, personal attention and support for patients and their families.

## 2015: Year in Review Staff

Connecticut Oncology Group has five highly-trained, hematology/oncology physicians and two experienced, board certified Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). In July of 2015, Dr. Karthikeyan Kandavelou joined the practice, filling the role vacated when Dr. Miklos Fogarasi retired in January 2015.

COG's providers are supported by a team of chemotherapy certified nurses, in order to best meet patient needs. In 2015, between the two infusion centers, these nurses administered more than 6,000 treatments.

The entire COG team is proud to have doctors on staff that have been selected as Connecticut Magazine "Top Docs" for three years in a row. COG is also pleased to be able to participate in Cancer Center community outreach events, such as

Survivors Day, the Shine a Light on Lung Cancer Vigil, Clinical Trials: Are they Right for You?, and the Nutrition/Colon Health Event.

#### **Technology & Equipment**

A highlight in 2015 was the purchase of 22 brand new, state-of-the-art infusion pumps; sixteen of these were placed in the Middletown office. The remaining six were for the Centerbrook facility, where the schedule was revised to allow for service to be offered there five days a week. COG purchased three new chemotherapy chairs, as well.

Patients continue to be able to access the on-site pharmacy in the Middletown office; the pharmacy technician is available to help patients identify financial assistance to obtain drugs when necessary.

To best serve patients and meet government mandates, in 2015, Connecticut Oncology Group made multiple changes and advances in software programs. The practice attained the second year of Stage II Meaningful Use for their electronic medical records, and there is a plan in place for a 2016 transition to Generation 2 IKnowMed, the practice's electronic medical record. Additionally, in March of 2016, COG updated their billing software. All of these transitions and processes have been successful.



Drs. R. Levy, E. Mariano, M. Farrell, S. Hong, & K. Kandavelou

For more than 30 years, the research team at the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center has facilitated access to cuttingedge clinical trials for cancer prevention, treatment, side-effect management, and quality of life, bringing the resources of large academic facilities to patients in their own community. Our team of research professionals screen each patient for clinical trial eligibility and manage participation for those individuals enrolled in a study.

The Connecticut Oncology Group is essential to the Cancer Center's successful research program, as Susanna Hong, MD and Robert Levy, MD serve as the Principal Investigators for cooperative group trials and industry-sponsored studies, respectively.

#### 2015: Year in Review

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) sponsors research studies through oncology research groups, or cooperative groups. Of the six total groups, Middlesex Hospital is a member of two.

Every three years, in order to ensure program quality, the NCI audits the research program at participating hospitals such as Middlesex. Auditors verify that patients treated on the research studies were eligible to participate and that they

received the proper study treatments. Auditors also look to ensure that all data submitted to the NCI were accurate.

The Cancer Center was audited by two cooperative groups in 2015 and is proud to report that both audits were flawless, with no deficiencies identified—a very rare finding. This speaks to the quality of the research program and dedicated team of physicians, nurses, research coordinators, and regulatory staff.

## Clinical Services

Research & Clinical Trials

## **2015 Study Accrual: Totals**

Patients Screened: 801

Patients Accrued: 52

# 2015 Study Accruals: Type of Study

NCI Cooperative Group: 5

Industry Sponsored: 11

 Locally Developed, Investigator Initiated: 3

Quality of Life: 28

 Referred Out of System for Clinical Trial: 5

### **Commendation: Clinical Research Accrual**

Based on their type and size, cancer programs are required by the Commission on Cancer to accrue, or enroll, a certain percentage of their patients to a clinical trial each year. This enrollment is monitored closely by the cancer program and helps ensure that patients are offered the best possible treatment options for their condition. From 2012 - 2014, the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center accrued the percentage of patients required to achieve commendation.

## Cancer Care Best Practices: Clinical Trials

During the accreditation evaluation, the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center was also recognized for the quality and comprehensive nature of their clinical trials program. Of note is the collaboration that takes place across specialties, as well as the variety of studies made available to patients.



#### **Clinical Services**

# Inpatient Oncology & Outpatient Infusion

#### **Foundation**

Middlesex Hospital maintains a highquality inpatient oncology program that provides exemplary, evidence-based medical care while participating actively in programs that grow and continuously improve the overall safety and satisfaction of their patients.

Middlesex also offers hospital-based outpatient infusion services in Middletown and Westbrook, in order to meet the diverse needs of the patient population.

#### 2015: Year in Review

#### **Safety & Satisfaction**

Prioritizing patient safety and satisfaction, the Inpatient Oncology unit, South 4, focused its programmatic efforts on improving Press Ganey and HCAHPS scores, as well as performing well on Nurse Sensitive Quality Indicators. In 2015, the South 4 team exceeded its goals for patient satisfaction with pain management and education, as well its targets for noise reduction, courtesy and respect, care coordination, and hand hygiene compliance.

South 4 continued its partnership with GOJO (Purell) to pilot a hand washing monitoring system. There were more than 60,000 opportunities to perform hand hygiene activities each month on the unit, and compliance rates have improved since the implementation of the project.

Patient safety goes beyond hand washing for the South 4 team; in 2015, there were only eight total patient falls, none of which

resulted in injuries. Additionally, the team maintained a rate of zero patients with catheter associated urinary tract infections in three of four quarters in 2015, as well as a rate of zero patients with unit acquired pressure ulcers stage II and above.

#### **Staff Certification**

The teams on South 4 and the Outpatient Infusion units continue to demonstrate their commitment to excellence through oncology-specific certifications. Four of twelve inpatient nurses are Oncology Certified Nurses, as are three of four nurses who work in Outpatient Infusion. This is significant on the inpatient unit in particular, as the floor is not exclusively used for cancer patients.

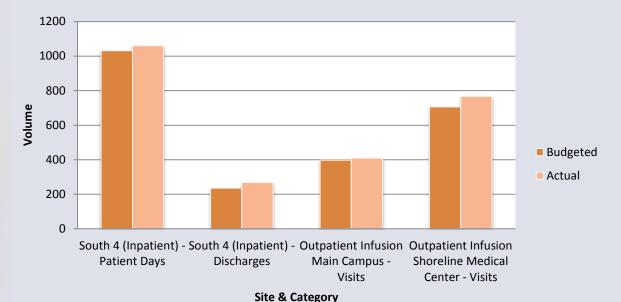
#### **Future**

The Inpatient Oncology team has established goals that will guide their program through 2018; these align with four strategic pillars:

- Enhance Professional Practice
- Demonstrate Safety & Quality Outcomes
- Foster a Culture of Pride, Ownership, and Accountability
- Deliver Innovative, Effective, and Efficient Care

The staff will also continue to work towards increasing rates of certification in oncology and other relevant areas of nursing.

South 4 & Outpatient Infusion Volumes: Budget vs. Actual



Eating well during cancer treatment is often critical to the body's ability to cope with – and recover from – chemotherapy and radiation. The Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center Oncology Nutrition program provides the resources and support patients need to maintain their energy level, combat weight loss or weight gain, and replenish nutrients.

#### 2015: Year in Review

2015 was a year of programmatic and clinical growth for the Oncology Nutrition Program, with referrals up 4% and interventions up 25% over the 2014 Fiscal Year. A per diem Registered Dietitian/ Certified Dietitian-Nutritionist was hired in December 2014 to ensure timely access to care for all patients.

#### **Growth & Innovation**

Each year, the Cancer Center embarks on multiple studies of quality to ensure the highest level of care is being given to all patients. In 2015, one of these studies examined care of head and neck cancer patients. Titled, "Multidisciplinary approach to reduce significant weight loss, swallow dysfunction and improve health-related quality of life, in the Head & Neck Cancer (HNC) patient," the Oncology Dietitian worked closely with the departments of Radiation Oncology and Speech-Language Pathology to explore the barriers to maintaining weight and

adequate nutrition for HNC patients.

This ultimately resulted in the implementation of a program through which speech-language pathologists assess HNC patients on-site in Radiation Oncology to ensure timely referral to necessary physical rehabilitation services. The Oncology Dietitian also sees these patients monthly, for at least six to nine months, following the assessment.

#### **Patient Support**

The Oncology Dietitian also serves as a means of connecting patients to additional support services, such as STAR physical rehabilitation, distress management/social work, and financial assistance.

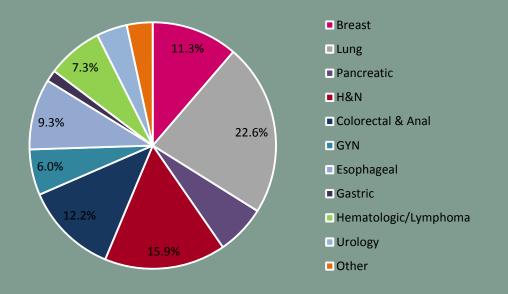
Additionally, care was coordinated for more than 15 patients requiring artificial feeding (enteral/parenteral nutrition); this included collaboration with infusion service companies, home care, and others.

#### **Community**

In 2015, in addition to hosting the annual Nutrition/Colon Event and participating in such Cancer Center events as Prevention Day, the Oncology Dietitian hosted the first-ever "Say Ahh!" Oral Cancer Screening Event. Local dentist Michele Salonia, DMD provided oral cancer screenings for nine community members, and the team provided education and samples of healthy foods to additional participants.



### **Oncology Nutrition**



Total Interventions by Oncology Nutrition Services by Primary Cancer Site (n=1,104)

# Supportive Services

## Distress Management and Social Work

#### **Foundation**

A cancer diagnosis affects more than just the body - it impacts the mind and spirit, as well as the practical aspects of daily life. The Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center Distress Management team provides a range of services, including social work, psychological/behavioral counseling, medication management, and spiritual counseling, to help patients cope with their diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship.

#### 2015: Year in Review

#### **Patient Support**

The social work team acts daily to assist patients with numerous practical matters, including financial concerns due to the burden of outstanding medical bills and housing/utility costs. In 2015, more than \$60,000 was granted to patients, with aid coming from the CT Sports Foundation (\$27,767), the Joe Andruzzi Foundation (\$25,081), the Breast Cancer Emergency Aid Foundation (\$5,439), and the Ron Foley Pancreatic Cancer Foundation (\$2,560), as well as CancerCare, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and the Clinton Rotary Cancer Relief Fund.

#### **Multidisciplinary Team**

In 2015, the Cancer Center's Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) continued to facilitate weekly distress management case rounds, which include Nurse Navigators, the psychiatry APRN, and others, as appropriate.

Additionally, our LCSW is the Psychosocial Representative to the Cancer Committee, managing the standards related to psychosocial care and promoting communication between physicians, nurses, and administrators of the cancer program.

She also completed training to become a Palliative Care Champion for the Middlesex Health System and continues to be an active member of the Hospital's bioethics committee.

#### **Staffing Updates**

In May 2015, the Cancer Center was fortunate to hire Joan Perkins, LMSW, to assist patients with their psychosocial needs on a per diem basis two days per week.

#### **Future**

In October 2015 the Oncology Social Worker and Hospital Chaplain attended a day-long conference at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, entitled, An Introduction to Meaning-Centered Psychotherapy in the Oncology and Palliative Care Setting. In 2016, they will offer a meaning-centered support group if sufficient patient interest exists and initiate use of this methodology on an individual basis, as well.

# 2015 Volumes: Referrals & Interventions

#### **Total Referrals: 477**

- Family & Emotional Concerns: 274
- Insurance/Financial: 220
- Transportation: 79
- Community Resources: 56
- Work/Housing: 51

#### **Total Interventions: 2,280**

- Financial/Insurance: 1,274
- Supportive Counseling: 1,204
- Community Resources: 439
- Transportation: 266

## Cancer Care Best Practices: Distress Screening

The Distress Management Program was noted, during the accreditation survey, for exemplary work in implementing distress screening. In 2012, the Commission on Cancer announced the phase-in of a standard that would require psychosocial distress screening, a mechanism that the Cancer Center has been working to implement since 2010. As of 2014, all of the standard requirements had not only been met, but exceeded, due to the inclusion of physical distress indicators on the psychosocial tool.

42% Increase in Referrals, Over Prior Year

45% Increase in Interventions,
Over Prior Year

The practices of both integrative medicine and cancer survivorship are rooted in the understanding that cancer impacts the whole person - body, mind, and spirit.

Integrative Medicine: Integrative Medicine (IM) practitioners support patient well-being through the use of complementary therapies that are administered alongside traditional cancer treatments. Modalities such as acupuncture, hypnotherapy, massage, reflexology, and reiki help manage the side- effects of chemotherapy and radiation, as well as reduce stress.

Survivorship: Finishing cancer treatment can be both a relief and a challenge, and the Center for Survivorship empowers survivors during the transition to life after cancer. Survivorship care focuses on quality of life and healthy lifestyle to reduce the risk of cancer recurrence and promote wellness; this is done in part through the Survivorship Visit, at which the APRN Survivorship Coordinator provides a treatment summary, performs a quality of life assessment, and makes referrals, as needed, to supportive services.

#### 2015: Year in Review

Both the Integrative Medicine and Survivorship programs saw considerable growth in 2015. A total of 7,309 IM sessions were delivered, 53% in the inpatient setting and 47% on an outpatient basis. Survivorship, meanwhile, received more than 242 referrals and provided a survivorship visit for 47% of those patients. The remaining patients either declined their visit or will be seen in 2016.

#### A Celebration of Life

In June of 2015, the Cancer Center hosted its annual Survivors Day event (photo page 23). Nearly 400 people attended to hear keynote speaker and cancer survivor Doug Dvorak.

#### **Future**

The Survivorship Coordinator has joined a network of hospitals in the State of Connecticut to work towards identifying revenue streams and developing reimbursement structures to support ongoing program growth despite an increasingly challenging, ever changing financial environment.



## **Cancer Care Best Practices**

The Survivorship Program was identified during the accreditation survey as a national best practice in terms of overall program quality, level of implementation, emphasis on in-person survivorship visits, and efforts to advance the practice of survivorship care.

### **NAPBC** Best Practices

Survivorship care is also a part of the standards put forth by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). As noted on page 6, the implementation of the survivorship program for breast cancer patients was also cited as a best practice by the accreditation surveyor.

# Supportive Services

Center for Survivorship & Integrative Medicine

# Supportive Services

Department of Hospice & Palliative Care

#### **Foundation**

The specialties of palliative care and hospice both emphasize the importance of quality of life at all stages of disease, and the Middlesex Hospital Department of Hospice and Palliative Care provides a wide range of symptom management and support services. Palliative care can take place throughout the course of an illness, and is utilized alongside medical care and curative treatments, while hospice care is available to those with advanced stage illness and whose life expectancy is approximately six months. Both have the ultimate goal of providing hope and comfort to patients and their families.

#### 2015: Year in Review

The Middlesex Hospital Department of Hospice and Palliative Care sees patients with a wide range of diagnoses; lung and other chest cavity cancers are the third most common condition seen in the program. As a result, the department works closely with the Cancer Center to ensure that oncology patients with these and other cancers receive the services they need.

#### **Staff**

In order to keep up with a growing census, the department added a full time APRN Palliative Care Coordinator, as well as a new case manager for home hospice. The Hospice and Palliative Care team continues to maintain a staff certification rate of 75% for nurses, social workers, home health aides, the medical director, and the department administrator.

Around the health system, Palliative Care Champions were identified and

trained, in order to increase understanding of—and advocacy for—the role of palliative care in various clinical settings. The Champions attend monthly meetings and additional trainings. Within the Cancer Center, the social worker (page 16) has taken on this position, and she works diligently to identify patients for whom palliative care services might be appropriate.

#### **Care for Veterans**

We Honor Veterans, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and the Veterans Administration (VA), provides educational tools and resources to programs around the United States with the ultimate goal of increasing the ability of organizations to care for veterans respectfully and compassionately.

In 2015, the Middlesex Hospital Department of Hospice and Palliative Care became a partner in this program, assessing its capacity to provide appropriate end-of-life care to veterans. The department has achieved Level 1 recognition.

#### **Future**

In 2016, the department will continue to focus on care for veterans, pursuing Level 2 recognition by November. Additionally, the team will continue its work to distinguish palliative care from hospice, through staff and community education, so that all patients have access to the supportive care they deserve at the appropriate time during their journey with chronic illness.



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## Middlesex Hospital Best Practices: Palliative Care Services

The Commission on Cancer requires that palliative care services, denoted as "patient and family centered care that optimizes quality of life and end-of-life care...being 'continuously available' throughout treatment, surveillance, and, when applicable, bereavement," are available on-site or by referral. Middlesex Hospital achieves this through its dedicated program, which works closely with the Cancer Center.

The surveyor who visited Middlesex Hospital in 2015 made special note of the dedication and compassion of William Zeidler, MD, Medical Director of the Department of Hospice and Palliative Care, noting that he is a true champion for patient and family well-being, as well as the important distinctions between hospice care and palliative care.

The Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center Patient Resource Library (PRL) provides a wealth of reliable, up-to-date cancer information services to patients and the public. Available print and digital resources help those at all stages of the cancer continuum better understand not only their condition but the numerous ways to improve quality of life, access community resources, and communicate with their loved ones.

#### 2015: Year in Review

In 2015, the PRL continued to grow its collection of these books, pamphlets, and online resources, purchasing 53 new items. These included titles such as *Thyroid Cancer: A Guide for Patients; Navigating Lung Cancer, the Anti-Breast Cancer Cookbook; Not the Last Goodbye;* and *Zen Cancer Wisdom.*New brochures covered such topics as cancer treatment summaries, nutrition, healthy living, grief, and surviving loss. All books, DVDs, and magazines are available for borrowing, free-of-charge, and many pamphlets are available for visitors to keep. Additionally, the online library catalogue, as well as the list of recommended

cancer-related websites, were updated and made more accessible to Middlesex Hospital clinicians and staff.

#### **Community Outreach**

Middlesex Hospital continued to be a participant with the Light One Little Candle Foundation, which seeks to promote bonding between cancer patients and their young children outside of the parent/caregiver's diagnosis.

Light One Little Candle provides children's books to cancer centers such as Middlesex; these books are free to patients who wish to spend time making memories through reading with their children. In 2015, Middlesex distributed free children's books to 91 families.

#### **Staffing**

Volunteers are key to staffing the Patient Resource Library at a level that ensures help is accessible to patrons as frequently as possible. Volunteers are available three mornings and one afternoon each week, to supplement the two days per week the Patient Resource Librarian is on-site.

## **Patient Resource Library Statistics: 2015**

5,311 Visits to the Library

459 Questions Answered

**78** New Registrations

483 Items Circulated

## Supportive Services

## Patient Resource Library

### **Data & Quality**

# Cancer Registry & Studies of Quality



#### Foundation

The primary role of the Cancer Registry is to provide timely, accurate oncology-related data for Middlesex Hospital, the State of CT, and the National Cancer Database (NCDB). The information collected, organized, and analyzed is used for research and quality studies, as well as to monitor trends and adherence to treatment guidelines. The data collected through Cancer Registries is critical to cancer surveillance and research world wide.

#### 2015: Year In Review

The Cancer Registry staff at Middlesex Hospital was essential in the achievement of the Commission on Cancer's (COC) Outstanding Achievement Award. The Cancer Registry Supervisor manages the collection and submission of all required information to the COC, as well as oversight of many of the commendation standards. The Registry is also very involved in the studies of quality and quality improvement initiatives required by the COC.

#### **Commendation Standards**

The Cancer Center achieved commendation on four data and registry-related standards:

- Cancer Registry Education
  - Middlesex a leader in supporting continuing education
- College of American Pathology Protocols
  - 95% of pathology reports properly formatted and include required data
- RQRS Reporting
  - Submission and adherence to Rapid Quality Reporting System terms.
- NCDB Submission
  - Error free submission of data to the National Cancer Data Base

#### Studies of Quality

## Monitoring Compliance With Evidence-Based Guidelines

**Purpose:** Evaluation of adherence to evidencebased guidelines for treatment of Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

**Outcome:** In 100% of cases, physicians followed National Comprehensive Cancer Network quidelines.

## Studying Outcomes for Patients With Cancer Study #1:

**Purpose:** To monitor rate and timeliness of referrals for feeding tubes in head and neck cancer patients.

**Outcome:** Study resulted in addition of patient visit with speech-language pathologist in Radiation Oncology Department during first treatment visit.

#### Study #2:

**Purpose:** To calculate percentage of patients with documented smoking history who are being referred for low-dose CT scan to screen for lung cancer.

Outcome: Due to challenges with electronic medical records, unable to determine exact rate. Education and outreach by Lung Nurse Navigator will continue, to increase awareness of lung cancer screening program among primary care physicians.

## Quality Improvement Projects Project #1:

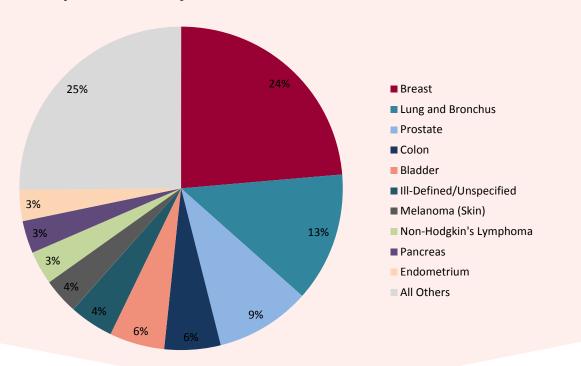
**Purpose:** To increase the rate of completed Distress Thermometer forms, which help determine each patient's need for psychosocial or physical rehabilitation services.

**Outcome:** Project led to increased rate of form completion, due to collaborative processes between Social Work, Physical Rehabilitation, Radiation Oncology, the Surgical Alliance, and Connecticut Oncology Group.

#### Project #2:

Purpose: To grow the ability of the Cancer Center team to recognize and address patient fatigue and coping during active cancer treatment. Earlier detection of these two symptoms was projected to be beneficial for overall well-being and recovery from treatment. Outcome: Patient care improvement plan devised and implemented. Improvements included development of mechanisms for increased communication between infusion nurses and patients, earlier delivery of Distress Thermometer, presentation of educational workshops for practitioners, and facilitation of communication between multidisciplinary care team.

## **Top Ten Sites by Percent of Total Cases: Calendar Year 2014**



# **2014 Site Volumes**

For a complete list of case volumes, please visit the American College of Surgeons National Cancer Database website.

Top Ten Sites by Stage							
	Stage 0	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV	Other	
Breast	38	101	34	9	6	3	
Lung/Bronchus	1	25	6	24	53	1	
Prostate	0	6	37	4	7	0	
Colon	4	8	11	13	5	2	
Bladder	27	10	8	2	1	1	
Ill-Defined	0	0	0	0	0	35	
Melanoma	4	8	4	2	0	0	
Non-Hodgkin's	0	5	8	4	10	1	
Pancreas	1	5	3	2	13	3	
Endometrium	0	19	1	2	3	1	

Total Cases by Class				
Analytic	773			
Non-Analytic	154			

Total Cases by Sex				
Females	513			
Male	414			

### **Community**

# Outreach & Education

### Foundations & 2015 Highlights

The Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center strives to be active in the community, particularly to share information about the importance of cancer prevention and how to access cancer screening resources.

In 2015, our team attended or hosted 51 unique events, reaching more than 5,000 people. These programs range in size–from fifteen people to more than 500 people–and include celebrations such as our Annual Survivors Day and educational workshops, such as the "What's In Your Genes" informational session on hereditary risk and genetic testing. Throughout the year, the team prioritized providing resources related to cancers associated with HPV; events included attendance at the Middlesex Community College Student Health Fair, at which 65 students received information about the HPV vaccine and other prevention methods, as well as the Say Ahh! Oral Cancer Screening, at which local dentist Michele Salonia, DMD screened nine community members. The Cancer Center's dietitian was also present at this event to provide education and samples of healthy foods to 20 people.

More than 85% of Cancer Center staff assists with these events. They also participated in events to support local patient assistance organizations and attended philanthropic events that support the Cancer Center, such as the goPINK Project.

#### **Future**

Late in 2015, the Cancer Center officially launched its Outreach Volunteer Corps, a group of hospital employees who generously give of their time to help out at oncology-related outreach initiatives. We look forward to teaming up with these volunteers in 2016.

## Cancer Care Best Practices: Community Outreach

The Cancer Center was commended, and identified as having a best practice, in the area of community outreach and education for a number of reasons. These included the depth and breadth of the programs both hosted and participated in, as well as the detailed tracking and continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of the events.



**Survivors Day** 



**Appetite for Life** 



goPINK Project

**Breast Health Road Show** 

**Honoring Veterans Lung Screening** 

**Women's Health Conference** 

**Men's Health Event** 

**Hope is Power Spin-a-thon** 

**Nutrition & Colon Event** 

## **Cancer Care Best Practices: Patient Family Advisory Council**

Middlesex Hospital is fortunate to have an active Patient and Family Advisory Council, comprising community members, past patients, and key stakeholders. This group provides valuable feedback to the hospital and contributes to a myriad of projects.

One of the Patient and Family Advisory Council members sits on the Cancer Center's Program Committee, a multidisciplinary group of staff representing the entire continuum of cancer care—from screening and prevention through treatment, supportive care, survivorship, and more—and other hospital departments, such as Philanthropy & Development.

During the Cancer Center's accreditation evaluation, special note was made of the fact that an Advisory Council member is so active the in the programmatic communications of the Cancer Center, sharing the PFAC's activities and representing the patient perspective. This was cited as a national best practice, as well.

## **Community**

#### **Volunteers**

## 

Bert Collyer, RT(T), one of the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center's six Radiation Therapists, was awarded the 2015 Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center Employee of the Year Award. Nominated by his peers, Bert was cited for the exceptional quality of his work, his compassion for patients, and his generosity towards fellow staff members.

Bert joined the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center team in 1998, before there was a physical Cancer Center on Saybrook Road in Middletown. Since then, he has been a supportive and energizing presence in the department. As one colleague wrote, "Bert is the true embodiment of the hospital's mission and core values. Providing safe, high-quality care with

honesty and compassion is not a job to Bert, but an inherent, genuine extension of his character."

Bert is frequently mentioned by patients as a caregiver who always goes the extra mile while remaining a consummate professional. Combining his expertise with kindness, he makes an extremely difficult time in patients lives as comfortable as possible. He shares his expertise with teammates, as well, mentoring new therapists and students alike. Bert can also be seen, with his family, volunteering at Cancer Center community outreach events, such as the Annual Men's Health & Wellness Day.

Congratulations to Bert, on behalf of the entire Cancer Center team, for this well-deserved honor.



**Employee of** the **Year** 



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# MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL CANCER CENTER

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