



Health & Wellness

Reimagining Cancer Care

Treating the whole patient through supportive medicine

Today, 15 million Americans are living with cancer. Fortunately, breakthroughs in research are leading to new, better treatments that are saving more lives, but the transition from cancer patient to cancer survivor brings more questions and unique, ever evolving challenges.

As we do a better job of treating patients' cancer and they are living longer—a greater number of people younger than 35 are recovering from cancer—they are encountering additional side effects. We are seeing more cancer survivors that have significant issues with physical health, emotional health, financial issues, spiritual needs, and more. Patients—and we say that our patients are the patient and their support, whether it's a family member or a neighbor or clergymen—can do really well with an interdisciplinary, team-based approach to tackle all that. And mounting evidence suggests that the earlier this holistic care is introduced, the more effective it is for increasing survival and improving quality of life—and in lowering the cost of care as well.

Thanks to a recent generous gift from a grateful patient family, David and Esperanza Neu, we can offer this kind of team-based, personalized care at the Neu Center for Supportive Medicine and Cancer Survivorship at Jefferson's Sidney



Kimmel Cancer Center. If you think about your oncologist as the person who treats your cancer, then our team at the Neu Center is made up of the people who help treat all the side effects of cancer throughout their journey, from diagnosis either into survivorship or at end of life care.

This is the basis of Jefferson's "Cancer Care 360" commitment to delivering advanced cancer care to the whole community. Our goal is to screen everyone from the moment they are diagnosed: Do an assessment, and identify areas that we're concerned about regardless of need, provider, background, age—anything. We are able to go out into the community to see people; home visits really can change what you know about someone. This is a

game changer for how we can help all of our patients get through their treatment in a better, more holistic way.

Cancer care is increasingly complex, and it's antiquated to think that any one person could "do it all." And there is a varying level of comfort and ability amongst oncologists for treating pain and other symptoms and side effects of treatment. Supportive medicine sees that as distinct and takes it on with a multidisciplinary approach, which often has better outcomes, more thorough follow-ups, and takes some of the burden off of the primary oncologist.

Supportive medicine includes all those patient services around

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oncologic care, such as social work, dietetics, financial counseling, a pharmaceutical assistance program, educational programming, and the new Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center Support and Welcome Center. We're enveloping the patient with care—seeing patients where they are, addressing their myriad needs.

We really focus on getting to the root of the problem, getting people aggressive symptom management to focus on quality of life. For the patients that have really high needs and really low means, we're going to come to them as best we can. Whether that's through telemedicine, or a home visit, or checking in on them if they go to a skilled nursing facility to help navigate the transition back home. We are building a team to be able to see patients through it all.

In addition to our supportive medicine program being another way to help patients, we also use it to train social work and public health students, medical residents, and pharmacists. Population health research is demonstrating that this model may actually drive down cost by keeping people out of ERs and preventing them from getting unnecessary treatment in the last month of their lives.

The Neu Center is different because as we grow in our three-year plan to expand across all of the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, we will be able to proactively address every patient—no matter what their cancer is, no matter what their age is. Regionally, we are on the cutting edge; very few, if any, places exist like that, and no one is systematically doing this in an adult cancer population as we will be with the Neu Center.

For more information about how we're reimagining cancer care at the Neu Center for Supportive Medicine and Cancer Survivorship, please visit Jefferson.edu/SupportNeuCenter.



Brooke Worster, MD, completed her internal medicine and chief residency at Temple University and her pain and palliative care fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital and Dana Farber Cancer center. She is an assistant professor in Jefferson's Department of Family and Community Medicine, director of the outpatient palliative care services, and medical director of the Neu Center for Supportive Services and Cancer Survivorship at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center.



Gregory Garber, MSW, LCSW, has more than 25 years of experience as an oncology social worker, working extensively with people diagnosed with cancer as well as their families, helping them better the quality of their lives before, during, and following treatment. He is director of the Cancer Support and Welcome Center and of Oncology Support Services at the Neu Center for Supportive Services at Cancer Survivorship at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center.