

Cancer Committee Report 2014



southern
new hampshire
health

Outstanding Achievement Award (OAA)

In 2014, the Cancer Program at Southern New Hampshire Medical Center was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award (OAA) by the Commission on Cancer. The Commission on Cancer (CoC) is a program of the American College of Surgeons that recognizes excellence in comprehensive, high-quality, and multidisciplinary patient-centered care.

The Cancer Program also excelled in seven of the commendation level standards without deficiencies, earning them a 3-Year Accreditation with Commendation. The program is one of only 75 nation-wide to achieve this prestigious Award in 2014, and reflects the outstanding effort and commitment by the entire cancer team in providing high quality cancer care to our patients.

To learn more about the Outstanding Achievement Award, visit the American College of Surgeons.

Our Community Partnerships

Southern New Hampshire Health is a sponsor for the 2014 Greater Nashua Community Health Assessment: Working Together to Build a Healthier Greater Nashua and an active member on the Advisory Council. An overview of the 2014 Community Assessment was presented to Cancer Committee, with a sub-committee formed to identify and address barriers to health care going forward in 2015.

For a full copy, visit Greater Nashua Community Assessment.



Quality Initiatives

A number of quality initiatives were accomplished in 2014:

1. Access to Clinical Trials

With the expansion of cancer-related services, access to clinical trials was identified as an opportunity for growth. A clinical Trial Recruiting Nurse was hired to help enrich the program, along with discussions with Massachusetts General Hospital and pharmaceutical sponsors.

The Health System offers patients access to the very latest in clinical trials, while giving physicians and researchers the opportunity to study the effectiveness of possible new treatment options. These trials are approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and sponsored by the National Cancer Institute through such federally certified groups as the Cancer and Leukemia Group B (CALGB) and the Southwest Oncology Group (SWOG).

In 2014, the Foundation Hematology /Oncology practice and the Cancer Center enrolled patients in six clinical trials. Twenty-five patients participated in active clinical trials specifically for breast cancer research.

2. Guidelines for Prostate Cancer Screening

Prostate Cancer Screening guidelines were instituted health-system wide. Presentations on the new guidelines were given at Cancer Committee, provider meetings, and in the community. In accordance with best practice and the availability of health insurance for all patients, it was decided that prostate cancer screenings will only be conducted within the provider office, versus community setting, with referral to specialist when needed.

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Quality Initiatives, continued

3. Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

A member of the Cancer Committee serves on the POLST State Collaborative. In 2014, six staff members were trained to administer POLST, and continuing medical education lectures given to providers and medical professionals. The number of patients that complete POLST is monitored and reported to the Committee, with recommendations for improvement as needed.

4. Lung Cancer Screening Program

Initial research was conducted for designation as a Lung Cancer Screening Center by the American College of Radiology, offering low-dose CT (LDCT) lung screening. Studies have shown that LDCT lung screenings can lower risk of death from lung cancer by 20% for people who are high risk. The program will be introduced in early 2015.

Quality Study

Annually, a quality study is conducted to ensure that patients are evaluated and treated accordingly to evidence-based guidelines. This year's study on Endometrial Cancer was performed by Lydia Garcia, MD. A total of 26 patients were diagnosed with Endometrial Cancer in 2013. Based on the study, 77% were postmenopausal, 24 of the 26 presented with irregular bleeding, and close to 100% were done using minimally invasive surgery (MIS). Overall, our partnership with MGH allowed us to keep 95% of the cases here, versus only two cases in 2010.

The results of the study were presented to the cancer committee and members of the medical staff.

Community Outreach

In 2014, a total of six cancer-related educational events were offered with over 400+ community residents in attendance. The programs supported our Quality initiatives, affiliation with MGH, and community assessment needs:

- Lung Cancer: Who Should Be Screened by Christopher Azzoli, MD / MGH Thoracic Oncology Program
- Sun Safety: To Bake or Not to Bake by dermatologist Robert Gordon, MD
- Gynecologic Cancer: The Untold Story by John Schrage, MD / Chief GYN & Chief GYN-Oncology, MGH
- Right Care, Right Time: Making Informed Decisions by S. Gautami Rao, MD/ Medical Director, Palliative Care
- Breast Cancer Reconstruction: What's Right for You by Richard Ehrlichman, MD/ MGH and Foundation Plastic Surgery
- Breast Health Display, City of Nashua Health Fair

In addition, our annual Skin Cancer Screenings helped to identify individuals who otherwise would not have been diagnosed or treated for their cancers. A total of 78 individuals were screened at three different locations.

Learn more about our community classes and screenings, visit snhhealth.org/classes.