

spotlight

Dale & Frances Hughes Cancer Center, Pocono Medical Center East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

New Facility Designed to be Patient and Environmentally Friendly



In June 2012 the doors of the new 59,000-square-foot, \$31 million Dale & Frances Hughes Cancer Center opened, realizing the goal of bringing all outpatient cancer services under one roof. The culmination of years of work and planning, the new three-story facility is a dramatic expansion from the previous 8,000-square-foot cancer center that had been located across the street from the hospital.

The decision to build the new facility stemmed from the region's rapid population growth along with a need to consolidate cancer services. Pocono Medical Center is located in Monroe County in northeastern Pennsylvania, the second fastest growing county in the state. Along with the population boom has come a higher incidence of cancer.

"The American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer-accredited cancer program was robust," said Stacy Goetz, executive director of Oncology Services at Pocono Medical Center. In 2011, in the midst of building the new facility, the Hughes Center received the 2011 Outstanding Achievement Award from the Commission on Cancer. "It was a very strong program with great physicians, it's just that we were fragmented," said Goetz. The cancer program is accredited by the American College of Radiation Oncology, National Quality Measures for Breast Centers for its breast program, and is currently applying for American College of Radiology accreditation.

Planning for the new cancer center

began more than four years ago, and the community has been involved every step of the way. Focus groups of current and former patients expressed a strong wish to have access to all oncology services in one location. They also wanted the new cancer center to be attached or close to the hospital. Previously, inpatients receiving radiation therapy had to travel by ambulance from the hospital to the cancer center to receive treatment. Today, an enclosed bridge connects the main hospital building to the new Hughes Cancer Center, easing transportation of patients to treatment. Designers included a two-sided elevator so that patients can move between facilities with privacy.

Patient-Centered Design

The architectural firm EwingCole designed the cancer center as a healing, comforting environment of care with an emphasis on nature. "We wanted this to be a patient-centered building," said Goetz. "We didn't want it to feel intimidating. We wanted it to feel warm and comfortable and not to create any more anxiety than patients already have." Inspired by the scenic and nearby mountains and woodlands, natural elements are incorporated into the building's aesthetics. The facility is also environmentally friendly—designed to LEED Silver standards.

The L-shaped, three-story building features a centrally located healing garden, and a rooftop garden sits atop the linear accelerator vault. A soothing water

feature graces the lobby and a complementary outdoor water feature, which is visible through the lobby's windows, creates the illusion that one flows seamlessly into the other, bringing the outside in. Inset within the walls are echoes of the local landscape including pieces of birch, while boulders serve as accent pieces within the spacious lobby area. Visitors entering the building are greeted by a three-story glass curtain wall that serves as the entranceway. Immediately to the right is the registration desk, framed by views of the healing garden. Volunteers are stationed at the desk to escort patients who need assistance finding their way in the new cancer center.

Located on the first floor are PET/CT and radiation oncology services. State-of-the-art technology includes a new Varian TrueBeam linear accelerator and a GE CT simulator. The cancer program was an early adaptor of IMRT, IGRT, and prostate seed implant, and also offers MammoSite, Contoura, Savi, and SenoRx for breast cancer. An amenity unique to the radiation therapy treatment rooms is ceiling monitors that display moving images such as swimming fish, birds in flight, and changing sky views—all helping to create a less claustrophobic atmosphere for patients. This wing also houses a dedicated HDR brachytherapy area. A staff of one radiation oncologist, six radiation therapists, two physicists, and two dosimetrists comprise this unit of the center.

Also located on the first floor are the



nurse navigators' offices and a conference room for meetings with patients and families. Currently, navigation services are available for breast, prostate/GI, and thoracic patients; plans are underway to expand to include additional cancer sites.

As an added convenience for patients and families, the first floor will include a retail boutique that will offer a variety of products that patients may need, such as wigs, special creams, prostheses, and more.

Directly across from the boutique space is a dietary teaching kitchen, designed so that the cancer center's dietitian can conduct group cooking demonstrations, as well as one-on-one nutrition teaching. Adjacent to the kitchen is volunteer office space. The cancer center partners closely with local Lymphoma & Leukemia Society and American Cancer Society chapters. This space provides room for these programs to store materials and facilitates their hosting of programs in the new cancer center.

From the lobby area a graceful open staircase leads to the second floor, which is also accessible by elevator. An open atrium on the second floor looks out over the lobby below. This area features a retail café offering coffee, snacks, and sandwiches, as well as several computers programmed with an e-library of cancer-related resources. Centrally located on this floor is a meditation room, which provides a quiet oasis for patients and family members to rest and reflect.

A Focus on Multidisciplinary, Disease-Site Specific Care

Clinical areas on the second floor include dedicated space for the cancer center's multidisciplinary disease-site-specific clinics. Surgical offices are located in

this same area with a dedicated breast surgeon and surgical oncologist on staff. Eight exam rooms are set aside for this clinic, which will also be available for use by the surgeons if no clinic is occurring. The cancer center holds twice weekly site-specific tumor boards for breast and thoracic cancers, as well as a general tumor board.

Adjacent to this area are medical oncology services with dedicated exam rooms and consultation space. The cancer program employs three medical oncologists and five oncology nurses. Within this area is a dedicated lab and oncology pharmacy staffed by two FTE pharmacists.

In designing the infusion suite, consideration was given to providing patients as many options as possible for controlling their environment. They can choose between private, semi-private, or public infusion treatment space. The infusion suite has four private rooms, 12 semi-private rooms with sliding glass doors that patients can open or close, and a centrally located "buddy room" for patients who want to socialize during treatment. Here, four recliners are arranged in a living-room-like setting that even includes a wall fireplace. Patients can regulate the radiant heat panels in the ceiling from their chairs to adjust the temperature to their liking. Each treatment bay includes a computer and television. The nurses' stations are located to allow visual contact with patients at all times, another patient request. Nurses check on patients in private rooms via monitors.

Continued Expansion

Plans are underway to move all of the cancer support group meetings to the

Select Support Services

- Social Work Services
 - Support Groups:
 - Breast Cancer
 - Prostate Cancer
 - Lymphoma/Leukemia/
Blood-related cancer
 - Bereavement
 - Stress Reduction
 - Hospice Care
 - Pastoral Care
- Number of new analytic cases seen in 2011: 550

new cancer center, as well as expand integrative service offerings to include a creative expressions group, yoga, massage therapy, and pet therapy.

Pocono Medical Center partners with nearby East Stroudsburg University and local agencies as part of its community outreach efforts to provide educational programs, awareness campaigns, and annual events, such as free breast cancer screenings during the month of October.

The Hughes Cancer Center also partners with Thomas Jefferson University and the Jefferson Cancer Network to expand patient access to clinical trials. The cancer center accrues approximately four percent of patients to clinical trials each year.

With the opening of the new Hughes Cancer Center, the goal of bringing comprehensive cancer services under one roof has been realized. Under the motto "Where hope lives, excellence thrives," the Hughes Cancer Center offers close-to-home care in an environment of care designed to put patients and their families at ease. 