

spotlight

James M. Stockman Cancer Institute Frederick, Maryland



The James M. Stockman Cancer Institute, located in a newly constructed 62,000 square-foot building in the heart of Frederick County, is not a typical cancer care facility. From the exterior, it looks like an upscale three-story office building. Inside, however, is the calm and warmth that characterizes the type of care patients receive there.

The cancer center, an affiliate of the Frederick Regional Health System, provides medical and radiation oncology services and houses an infusion center, a center for chest disease, a USP <800> compliant dedicated oncology pharmacy, a thoracic oncology surgical practice, and a multidisciplinary clinic suite. A renovated imaging and lab facility is located on campus and connected by a concourse, so patients can receive all of their services in the same location. The facility also provides supportive care services including integrative oncology, financial counseling, social work, clinical trials, and support groups. The cancer center currently includes 4 medical oncologists, 2.5 radiation oncologists, 2 thoracic surgeons, 13 nurses, 2 pharmacists, 3.5 social workers, and a financial counselor.

The Big Move

Frederick County has a population of more than 240,000, and its fastest growing demographic is those 65 years and older. To better serve its community, Frederick Regional Health System knew that it needed to move its cancer center out of the facility's previous location (a converted grocery store). It was outdated, had inadequate infusion

capacity, and was not adjacent to imaging or lab services.

To strategize workflow, design, and processes of care for a new location, senior leadership brought in Mark S. Soberman, MD, MBA, FACS, medical director of the oncology service line. One of the first decisions made was to move the facility off the hospital campus, as it was too congested. In addition, moving off campus lowered construction costs and facilitated the conversion from a hospital outpatient program to a physician office-based program, lowering the cost of care to patients and insurers. It was decided that the building should be constructed from scratch.

Dr. Soberman and oncology team members mapped out processes of care for the new building under the guiding principle of "form follows function." Along the way, input was gathered from physicians, administrative staff, nurses, therapists, and support staff, as well as focus groups of prospective, current, and former patients. This feedback ensured that everyone using the facility had a voice on key factors like accessibility, workflow, and ease of use.

When the health system reached out to the local community for funding for the new cancer center, the support was overwhelming. In total, the community donated \$20.3 million of the \$21.2 million needed to build the cancer center's two floors. "This Cancer Institute is built for this community and by this community," Soberman said. The cancer center occupies two floors of the building, and community practitioners lease offices on the third floor.

With the guidance of the Samueli Institute (samueliinstitute.org), the Stockman Cancer Institute employed the Optimal Healing Environment design model, focusing on natural materials, warm colors, and intuitive patient wayfinding. The Samueli Institute also worked with cancer center staff on how to interact with patients in a more mutually beneficial manner. The infusion clinic features 20 customized pods and 4 private rooms bathed in soft green overlooking a healing garden, and the radiation oncology vault features warm lighting made to look like blue skies and paintings of wooded landscapes.

When the cancer center's doors opened for the first time on July 27, 2017, the vision of a community-focused cancer center built from the ground up was finally realized. "We built a cancer center that would support and facilitate the type of patient-centric care model we wanted to deliver because it's the right thing to do," said Soberman.

Envisioning Multidisciplinary Care

Part of the motivation behind creating the Stockman Cancer Institute was to provide a central location for cancer patients to visit for all their needs. The cancer center's multidisciplinary clinic provides this one-stop-shop for patients, allowing them to be seen in one day by navigators, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, surgeons, social workers, and financial advocates, if need be. The Institute plans to incorporate palliative care into these clinics so that patients with more advanced disease can



get necessary care from the beginning of their treatment.

Stockman Cancer Institute also offers integrative oncology in addition to medical, surgical, and radiation oncology, and received input from practitioners in the community as well as a community advisory board on what services to offer. The medical director of the medical oncology practice formerly served as a Senior Investigator in Integrative Oncology at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and his experience and expertise were instrumental in creating the program, which will be evidence-based and integrated into the patient's overall care plan and medical record. The cancer center currently offers Reiki and massage and plans to add Tai chi, Qigong, yoga, and acupuncture to its services, opening an integrative oncology clinic in November. Dr. Soberman says that the cancer center does not want any patient to forgo these complementary treatments for lack of means.

Of cancer sites seen at the center, breast cancer is the most prevalent, followed by lung, prostate, and colorectal. Currently, the center is affiliated with an offsite comprehensive breast center and surgical oncology practice. As the program expands, the cancer center will add colorectal and prostate clinics on site in addition to its breast and lung clinics.

As part of its mission to be truly multi-disciplinary, the cancer center has an accredited clinical trials program, staffed by a full-time manager and two nurses.

These trials are cooperative ventures sponsored by the NCI or pharmaceutical companies, and they target every tumor site. There are currently 34 open trials being run, and the cancer program's accrual rate is 10 percent.

Collaborative Success

The Stockman Cancer Institute is a member of the MD Anderson Cancer Network. Through this affiliation, the cancer center has access to the latest clinical algorithms and protocols, educational materials, and research. MD Anderson Cancer Network members have been certified in excellence for cancer care, and 16 physicians at Stockman Cancer Institute are certified by the network. These physicians participate in weekly treatment planning video conferences and have access to peer-to-peer consultations with MD Anderson Cancer Center faculty coordinated by the Institute's full-time MD Anderson liaison.

MD Anderson provides valuable feedback to its network affiliates, conducting an ongoing annual quality review that leads to programmatic improvement initiatives. MD Anderson reviews the quality and safety of the care provided, as well as patient charts, to help identify areas for improvement. For example, as part of this review, Stockman Cancer Institute received feedback on its USP <800> oncology pharmacy and incorporated suggested quality and safety checks into its workflow.

The Second Opinion Clinic is a unique offering of the Stockman Cancer Institute.

Patients previously seen by a cancer provider outside the Institute can self-refer or they can be referred by their primary care provider. A nurse navigator collects all relevant information, which is then reviewed by the medical oncology director. The patient is then seen by an MD Anderson-certified physician or physicians at the center as appropriate. After the physician consultation, all patients are discussed in a peer-to-peer consult with a member of the MD Anderson faculty. Following the peer-to-peer consult, the patient returns to the clinic, and the physician discusses the consensus recommendations and shares them with the primary care provider. The patient is billed normally for the second opinion and receives no extra charge for the outside consultation.

Says Dr. Soberman, "I'm proud of the fact that our physicians and our senior leadership team saw the wisdom in affiliating with the number-one cancer program in the country in order to elevate our level of care for the community." 

Select Supportive Care Services

- Support groups
- Financial counseling
- Look Good, Feel Better
- Fitness and nutrition services

Number of new analytic cases seen in 2016: 933