

Power of giving

Donors *make the difference*

Winter 2021

Donors bring nutrition help to cancer patients

Steve Reutov knows how the side effects of cancer treatment can wreak havoc on a person's diet. After radiation and chemotherapy for throat cancer, Steve needed a surgically implanted feeding tube. "I lost taste and couldn't swallow," he recounts. "I lost about 50 pounds."

Steve's experience is not unusual. Side effects, such as loss of appetite, sore mouth or throat, dry mouth, and abdominal pain can impair cancer patients' nutritional intake.

Nutrition counseling is not covered by most insurance. But, thanks to generous donors, cancer patients at Providence Newberg Medical Center have help. Grace Laman, RD, counsels patients based on the type of cancer they have and the problems they experience.

Grace seeks to maximize each patient's ability to get nutrients. In Steve's case, she counseled him on eating to minimize muscle loss while managing his diabetes. "When you have what I had, eating is the last thing on your mind," said Steve. "Grace always encouraged me so I didn't quit on myself."

Healthy nutrition is a key factor in fighting cancer. Providence patients receive a screening prior to treatment to identify those most at risk for malnutrition. The test is repeated every few weeks during treatment. "By improving nutrition, we prevent hospitalizations for things like dehydration and malnutrition," said Grace. "We prevent delays in treatment and improve overall quality of life outcomes."

Steve's weight has stabilized. He is continuing treatments, and eating is much more normal for him, though he has to skip some foods. "I miss the spicy stuff," he said. "Grace was very professional and encouraging. She was always there to listen and make suggestions for what I could do." ■



Steve received help with his nutritional needs while undergoing treatment for throat cancer.

Gifts ease the way for the poor and vulnerable

Donor support for Providence's Behavioral Health BOB program has improved the health and well-being of hundreds of people in need.

BOB, which stands for Better Outcomes thru Bridges, serves vulnerable and underserved people, connecting them with outreach, peer support and resources for their journey toward better well-being. BOB's outreach specialists make calls to senior patients to offer support and resources, connect families with diapers, food and other donated supplies, and deliver cold weather and hygiene supplies to people living outdoors.



Christian Mendoza, bilingual lead outreach support specialist – westside, outside the tiny home used for patients who need temporary housing after discharge from the hospital.

One person helped, Kurt (not his real name), desperately needed surgery to alleviate excruciating pain in one of his hips. Unable to work, he had been living in his car. His surgeon at Providence Newberg Medical Center did not feel it was safe to schedule his surgery until he had a stable place for his recovery.

The BOB team connected Kurt with a community partner that operates a tiny home village in Newberg. With a safe and warm home for Kurt's recovery the surgeon was able to proceed with the surgery, giving Kurt almost immediate pain relief. The BOB team worked with Kurt throughout his recuperation, including daily check-ins and connections to resources like laundry, food, and gas.

Kurt is now fully recovered from his surgery and on a waitlist for public housing. With support from BOB, he is preparing to get back into the workforce.

"At BOB we have the incredible opportunity to believe in people at times when they cannot believe in themselves," said Becky Wilkinson, LCSW and BOB program manager. "Then the incredible resiliency they show inspires us in turn." ■

Despite pandemic, cardiac rehab forges ahead

While social distancing required by the pandemic reduced the number of patients who can be served in Providence Newberg's new Joan D. Austin Cardiac Rehabilitation Center, it has not stopped progress.

"We are open for business," said Jill MacKenzie, interim cardiac rehab manager. In addition to serving 60 patients each week with supervised and socially-distanced exercise, the center serves as home base for one-on-one dietary consultations, advice on customized at-home exercise programs, and assessments and personalized plans for reducing risks to cardiovascular health. "I love my job," said Jill, "because of the progress we see our patients make and the gratitude they express for the program. We are all very thankful for the donors who helped bring this to Newberg." ■



Dana Pharr, lead exercise specialist, checks Larry Zimmerman's progress.



The new cancer center is bright and cheerful, providing relaxing views as patients receive treatment.

Stress relief to help healing

In 2020, Mike was diagnosed with a rare, aggressive form of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He said his experience at Providence Newberg has been top-notch. "The new cancer center is super clean, and I have nothing but great things to say about all the people there."

Mike is also thankful for the financial assistance he's received. He was hesitant to apply for help at first, "but everyone was overly kind and made the whole process very easy. The assistance has relieved a lot of stress and helped with my healing." ■

Cancer care transformed

Donors to the new Providence Cancer Institute Newberg Clinic transformed cancer care at Providence Newberg.

"It's like night and day compared to the old center," said patient Sharon Nelson. "When you first go in, it's so light and so roomy. It just kind of takes your breath away. It's much more private. There's more room for people in wheelchairs. And the view is absolutely panoramic. The windows wrap around, and you can look out and see all the trees."

The new center, which now includes a thoracic surgeon and a breast surgeon, significantly expanded cancer services available at Providence Newberg. The new diagnostics lab means that patients only have to wait 15 minutes to start treatment, compared to the hour wait before. There is also space for nutrition counselors and social workers who help patients navigate non-medical services.

"We're able to offer a fuller spectrum of care," said Melissa Sayyah, clinic manager. "Before our offerings were much more limited, and patients would have to go to Providence St. Vincent for many services."

The clinic has been essential during the pandemic. "The larger space allowed us to social distance," said Melissa. "We would not have been able to be open at all without it."

Donors helped fulfill a promise to bring world-class cancer care close to home for Providence patients. "It's like a feature of a major hospital," said Sharon. "I don't have to leave town, and that's one of the very best things about it. Everything is right here now." ■



Sharon appreciates the new cancer center's design, including the beautiful views and the enhanced privacy.

Inspiring Generosity ♥

Our Mission

As expressions of God's healing love, witnessed through the ministry of Jesus, we are steadfast in serving all, especially those who are poor and vulnerable.

Values

Compassion, Dignity, Justice, Excellence, Integrity

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