

# Power of giving

Donors *make the difference*

May 2019

## Becky Roth is unstoppable

Cancer tried but it couldn't stop Becky Roth. An avid runner, Becky wasn't going to give up running because of cancer. "I am stronger now than I ever was," Becky said.

In 2010, Bryan Bell, M.D., D.D.S., surgeon at Providence Cancer Institute, discovered a tumor at the base of her tongue and jaw. It was oral cancer.

Patients with oral cancer undergo some of the most intense treatment of any form of cancer. Becky had multiple surgeries, chemotherapy and excruciating radiation.

"In Becky's case, it was particularly complex," said Dr. Bell. "Your ability to speak, to taste, to swallow, to smell, see and hear; your facial appearance – all of these are affected."

She had her jaw rebuilt using the fibula from one of her legs. A year later, the cancer returned and more of her jaw was replaced with the fibula from the other leg. "She is actually missing about two-thirds of her jaw and half her tongue," said Dr. Bell.

Other doctors told her she'd never run again. That was not part of her plan. Since having her fibulas removed she has completed several races including a half marathon and a marathon. In 2018, she ran in the Providence Hood to Coast relay with a team made up of other cancer survivors and Providence caregivers. Their team name: the "Cancer Crushers." More than \$850,000 was raised by teams participating in Hood to Coast.

"I am a mom first and foremost," Becky said. "I think this is why in the deepest part of my being, I needed to be here for my son and daughter. I don't consider myself a hero. I am a wife and mom and I fought for them." ■



*Laurie Kelley, chief development officer, Providence Foundations of Oregon; Luke Stager; Kelly Buechler, executive director, Providence Portland Medical Foundation; and Becky Roth proudly display the symbolic check signed by participants. Luke and Becky ran as part of the Cancer Crushers team.*



*Brian Bell, M.D., D.D.S., with Chris and Becky Roth. Becky spoke about her cancer journey at the blessing of the space.*



*Caregivers are excited about the bright new patient care areas.*



*Brian Piening, Ph.D., and Brady Bernard, Ph.D., shared their research with guests at the 2018 Creating Hope dinner.*

## Expanded Cancer Services

Thanks to you, the 11th floor of the Robert W. Franz Cancer Center at Providence Portland Medical Center is now open.

The expanded and consolidated outpatient cancer services will enhance care for the 5,000 cancer patients at Providence Portland every year. Hundreds more patients will be able to receive care in this new space.

The clinic was designed with input from patients, their family members, and health care teams. "We have been redefining health care as we developed a space that will meet the needs of our patients," said Kevin Olson M.D., executive medical director, Providence Cancer Institute.

The range of services offered on the 11th floor include:

- Specialty clinics including thoracic surgery, head and neck surgery, a dentistry clinic and a gynecologic oncology program
- A cancer genetics program and genetic risk clinic, led by a medical geneticist
- Expanded infusion spaces, making it more convenient to get care
- A specialty pharmacy, including retail products and research medications

Having all these services located in one space gives patients increased access to clinical trials and promising new research. Thank you for giving hope to our patients. ■

## Bowen Challenge Update

Donors stepped up to meet the challenge issued by Providence St. Vincent Medical Foundation Trustee Walt Bowen to fund a centralized hub for cancer immunotherapy bioinformatics.

Current immunotherapy treatments work in about 20-40 percent of cancer patients. The key to increasing the success rate lies in understanding each individual's unique tumor and their immune response to it. Funds from the challenge purchased equipment and technology to collect the data and hire the people to analyze it as quickly as possible.

Both Brian Piening, Ph.D., and Brady Bernard, Ph.D., have recently hired bioinformaticists for their labs and are recruiting for more positions. A bioinformaticist combines research in biology, medicine, and health-related studies with information technology in order to collect and interpret data. Research is underway but it's too early for results.

Thanks to you, we will have the information needed to make treatment more effective and tailored to a patient's specific needs. ■

## MR-Linac provides more precise treatment

Accuracy is key to successful radiation therapy. But cancer is unpredictable – it often doesn't stay in one place and doesn't stay the same shape or size.

Radiation therapy has been used for cancer treatment for more than a century. Improvements in technology have made treatment planning more accurate and effective, but even the best treatment plan can fall short when a cancer tumor moves or changes shape or size.

Now, thanks to your generosity, our radiation oncologists and technicians soon will have a new MR-Linac machine to help them. The MR-Linac combines two current technologies into one machine. It delivers radiation with more accuracy and adapts to tumor shape and position in real time. This improvement means more healthy tissue is spared.



"We are so thankful for this. It is the technology of the future," said Kristina Young, M.D., Ph.D., radiation oncologist and immunologist. "It can deliver radiation with more accuracy while leading to new ways to study tumor biology within a patient."

Providence Portland is the first medical center to have this technology on the West Coast. The MR-Linac is scheduled to be installed in October. ■

## New labs mean more research

With the addition of 10,000 square feet of lab and office space in the Earle A. Chiles Research Institute, doctors and researchers are expanding the scope of their investigations.

Labs in the new space include:

- Integrated Therapies Lab led by Michael Gough, Ph.D., and Marka Crittenden, M.D., Ph.D.
- Tumor Microenvironment Lab led by Kristina Young, M.D., Ph.D.
- Immunohistology Core Lab led by Zhaoyu Sun, Ph.D.

Three new principal investigators have joined Providence to lead new laboratories with more investigators to be added in 2019.

This \$5 million expansion was funded by a bequest gift from Robert W. Franz in honor of his sister Elsie Franz Finley. The new lab space includes a beautiful new conference room named in honor of Elsie. ■

**"Bob Franz's gift enabled us to expand and begin recruiting the next generation of cancer researchers. It serves as an inspiration to us all to have supporters like Bob and Elsie join in our efforts to finish cancer."**

– Walter Urba, M.D., Ph.D.

# Dr. Curti chair endowment

Brendan Curti, M.D. leads several clinical trials to improve survival rates of cancer patients. He is determined to help patients receive the best treatment possible as they face cancer.

In recognition of Dr. Curti's many contributions, he is the first recipient of the Robert W. Franz Endowed Chair for Clinical Research at Providence. His research and clinical focus is translational research – taking ideas generated by scientists in the lab and translating them into clinical trials for patients with melanoma, kidney, bladder, prostate and other types of cancer.

"Over the last 20 years, there have been many advances in cancer research," said Dr. Curti. "It has been a privilege for me to participate in some of this work and a pleasure to know many courageous patients who contributed to the research by volunteering to receive new medicines to fight their cancer." More than half of his patients volunteer to participate in clinical trials.

Dr. Curti has been with Providence since 2002. He holds three positions within Providence Cancer Institute – director, Genitourinary Oncology Research; director, Cytokine and Adoptive Immunotherapy Program; and medical director, Providence Melanoma Program. ■



*Brendan Curti, M.D., (seated) celebrates receiving his new endowed chair with Providence Cancer Institute colleagues Bernie Fox, Ph.D., Eric Tran, Ph.D., Walter Urba, M.D., Ph.D., Andy Weinberg, Ph.D., Steve Bader, M.D., David Page, M.D., and Kevin Olson, M.D.*

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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