



HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY ASSOCIATES
OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

5008 Brittonfield Parkway, Suite 700
E. Syracuse, NY 13057 * 315.472.7504 * www.hoacny.com

**Our
Connection
to You**

Fall—Winter 2008
Newsletter

Our Mission is to provide the highest level of quality care in a healing environment for the mind, body and spirit of patients dealing with cancer and blood disorders.

A Warm Welcome to our Syracuse Hematology/Oncology Patients!

In August of 2008, Drs. Ben Himpler, Angelie Roman and Alicia Bair integrated their practice, formally known as Syracuse Hematology/Oncology into Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY. The motivation for this integration was two-fold. The primary reason was the economic and reimbursement issues that have plagued cancer care in the USA since the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. That legislation makes it nearly impossible for a small cancer practice to survive in this country and many practices throughout the USA have been forced to join larger groups or shut down their practice due to financial crises. The greatest impact from that legislation was and still is the reimbursement of drugs. (Continued on page 2)

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Unique Connections receives a \$20,000 Grant for Breast Cancer Patients! (Page 3)



Quote for the Quarters

Love doesn't make the world go 'round; love is what makes the ride worthwhile.

Franklin P. Jones

Syracuse Hematology/Oncology Integration (continued from page 1)

President Bush and Congress' desire was to create a modern Medicare system that would render the biggest improvements in senior healthcare in nearly 40 years. The intent was to provide seniors with more choices that included a prescription drug benefit. The president applauded congress for keeping its promise to America's seniors by giving them more choices and better benefits—including real savings from prescription drug charges. The cuts to cancer care in this legislation equated to a decrease of 11.5 Billion Dollars over 10 years for doctor's offices. The payments for drugs were substantially decreased and the reimbursement for services rendered remains below costs in many cases. This shrunk the operating margins of cancer practices all over the country. If a practice didn't have a large base of patients or have a plethora of diversified services, like Radiation Therapy, they found themselves in a position where they could not sustain their practice. In usual form, other payers like Excellus hop on the reimbursement band wagon and subsequently cut drug reimbursement to emulate our country's Medicare program. The economic impact from this has had a dramatic impact on all cancer practices and Hematology-Oncology Associates has not been immune to these financial pressures. It has been very difficult to maintain the level of service and value-added programs our patients have become accustomed to—but somehow, we've been blessed to continue all our programs in the face of these economic challenges.

Another very important reason why Drs. Himpler, Roman and Bair decided to integrate SHO into HOACNY was to allow their patients to access the magnitude of clinical research protocols, high-tech cancer treatments like CyberKnife, IMRT/IGRT, and support and ancillary services our practice offers. In addition to our commitment to excellence in traditional cancer therapy, we also offer integrative/complementary therapies to augment treatment and foster wellness of body, mind and spirit.

We recognize that patients of SHO had burdens of paperwork, billing information and past medical and treatment histories to share with us and we are grateful to them for their understanding and patience. We are sensitive to the fact that some patients had to relocate to a new and larger facility and others changed physicians to be closer in proximity to their homes. Our patients mean the world to us and we are grateful to everyone that has entrusted us with their care. We try to develop a partnership among many such that the journey of healing is surrounded by hope, compassion and a dedication to excellence. A sincere thank you to all our patients for supporting us during our transitions and being patient with our new employees.

If you'd like to stand up for Cancer Care and encourage our political leaders to ensure adequate access for patients and reimbursement for doctor's offices, you may contact the following:

Congressman Walsh 423-5657 **Senator Clinton 448-0470** **Senator Schumer 423-5471**

ATTENTION: Breast Cancer Patients/Survivors



Unique Connections was awarded \$20,000 for "The Healing Connection" program. Unique Connections, is a non-profit organization that provides support and guidance to cancer patients throughout Central New York. The Healing Connection program allows cancer patients to apply for vouchers that will pay for a series of complementary therapies such as massage therapy, Reiki, healing touch, foot reflexology and acupuncture. Additional information regarding Unique Connections can be found at www.unique-connections.org.

Do you Want
to be a
Mentor?

Cancer survivors pass on guidance, assistance, and support to our patients who are newly diagnosed and undergoing treatment.

Do you remember what it felt like to travel that journey? Do you want to help a newly diagnosed cancer patient? Would you consider being a mentor?



unique connections

Would you like the
support of a cancer
survivor?

Do you want to talk to someone who has gone through a similar experience? Do you want to talk to someone, but don't want to worry family members or friends? Would you like a mentor to contact you?

Unique Connections, Inc., a tax-exempt corporation founded by HOACNY.

www.unique-connections.org

315.634.5004

For the Mind and Spirit

More Support for our Patients * Free to All !!

Patient Support Group

This group is facilitated by Gussie Sorensen, LCSW-R and Carol Ahlstrand RN. You do not need to be a patient of the practice to attend. Support groups meet the fourth Tuesday of each month, from 4–5:30 pm in the Brittonfield 3rd floor conference room. This venue provides an excellent opportunity to share your journey while receiving love and support from other patients, survivors and highly skilled and experienced staff.

Look Good... Feel Better

Cosmetology professionals will help you with make-up application, dry skin, discolored nails, choice and care of a wig, scarves, turbans and hats.

Held every 2nd Monday from 5:30—7:00 pm at our Brittonfield Office

Held the last Monday of each month from 5:15—7:30 pm at Community General Hospital, Dining Room One

Call 1-800-227-2345

Sponsored by the American Cancer Society, The Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association and the National Cosmetology Association.

Art as Therapy

Classes held:

Every 4th Monday of the month from 5–7 pm

Art in all its forms is good for the soul and body! A truly therapeutic adventure—join Art Therapist Lisa Kiefer at our Brittonfield Office

Support Group for Recurrent Disease

This support group is dedicated to providing guidance to those cancer patients with recurrent disease. The unique aspects of this journey are explored with patients who are experiencing similar challenges. This group meets the 1st & 3rd Monday of each month from 4–5:30 pm at Brittonfield in the 3rd floor conference room and is facilitated by Gussie Sorensen, LCSW-R and Beth Connolly, RN, NP.



The mission of the KATS (Kids Adjusting Through Support) program is to help children and their families cope with serious illness by intervening with group support and education.

A new series begins on January 21, 2009—March 11, 2009 from 5:30 pm—7:30 pm.

If interested, please register with Tara Jones at 315.472.7504 x 1707

Young Survivors Group

Please call Tara Jones at 472-7504 x1701 to inquire as to dates, times and location.

Bereavement Group

Please call Tara Jones at 472-7504 x1701 to inquire as to dates, times and location.

Clinical Research



The NSABP Foundation is proud to commemorate its 50th anniversary by honoring the thousands of women and men who have participated in NSABP research and other landmark clinical trials. On September 5th, 2008, the NSABP dedicated this sculpture called "Emergence", which will be on permanent display at the NIH Clinical Center, Bethesda, MD, the nation's largest hospital devoted entirely to clinical research. This one-of-a-kind recognition honoring clinical trial participants is being made on behalf of the thousands of doctors, nurses, and clinical research associates who conduct NSABP studies.

"Emergence" is the appropriate sculpture to recognize the contributions of clinical trial volunteers. It is from the seeds of clinical trials that new and proven therapies are developed, and their emergence would not be possible without clinical trial volunteerism. This artwork will serve as a lasting tribute to the study participants who have given their time, devotion and commitment to advance medical science by being involved in a clinical trial.

What is a CCOP?

Hematology-Oncology Associates is the only **Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP)** in the United States not affiliated with a Hospital, Medical School or University. This 23-year affiliation with the National Cancer Institute provides opportunities for clinical cancer research because the CCOP is a large network that enables patients and physicians to participate in clinical trials across the United States and Puerto Rico. The program allows Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY to access investigational drugs and treatments for patients in our community. There is no need to leave home to obtain cutting edge cancer trials. HOA is the **ONLY** CCOP in Central New York!

2008 Clinical Trials Award American Society of Clinical Oncology

Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY was recognized by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and received the 2008 Clinical Trials Participation Award. This awards program recognizes community oncology practices that actively participate in clinical trials. Support for clinical trials, as the basis for improved cancer care is the core value of the Society and is at the heart of their programs and services. This award represents a visible demonstration of ASCO's commitment to clinical trials and research. This is a great honor for HOA and underscores the importance and magnitude of our clinical research to our community.

*We're not miles away ...
Just miles ahead*



The Wellness Center



Hematology-Oncology Associates Comprehensive Inpatient Treatment and Support Services

- ◇ Chemotherapy and Radiation
- ◇ Clinical Research
- ◇ CyberKnife®
- ◇ Clinical Laboratory
- ◇ Pharmacy
- ◇ CT and Other Diagnostic Testing
- ◇ Patient and Family Counseling and Support Group Services
- ◇ Nutritional Counseling
- ◇ Integrative/Complementary Therapy

On June 2nd, Hematology-Oncology Associates opened their new Wellness Center to the public. It's located in Medical Center West at 5700 West Genesee Street in Camillus. It is in the same space that our Medical/Radiation Oncology services were rendered but the space is now unrecognizable from those days. The healing atmosphere, with music and a water fall was completely redesigned with our patients and the community in mind. There are many wonderful opportunities for the mind, body and spirit. Among them are: meditation classes, Yoga, Pilates, Reiki Therapy, Healing Touch, Foot Reflexology, Zumba, Belly Dancing, NIA (Neuromuscular Integrative Action/ non-impact aerobics) and much more. Check out what's happening at www.hoacny.com or call 234-HOPE.

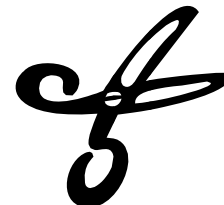
Community Educational Programs

Amenities

- ◇ Art Facilities
- ◇ Imaging Services
- ◇ Flat Screen TV's in Infusion
- ◇ Free Parking
- ◇ Electronic Medical Record

Clip This Coupon for a Free Reiki Treatment.

Reiki Therapy is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation which promotes healing. The word means "Universal Life Energy". It is a particular vibrational frequency that brings harmony, balance and being to the mind, and spirit. Just clip this coupon and call Ann 234-HOPE.



Integrative Medicine—Wellness Programs

Integrative or Complementary Therapies are services that support your current medical treatment and are never intended to replace it. They are for patients who are seeking wellness or well being of not only the physical body, but of the mind, body and spirit.

Massage
Yoga

Reiki
CranioSacral Therapy

Healing Touch

Lymphatic Drainage

Vibrational Healing

Acupuncture
Foot Reflexology

*Brittonfield Office—Please call Anne at 472-7504 x 3000 to set up an appointment .
The Wellness Center at Medical Center West call 234-HOPE*



Our Featured Modality

CranioSacral Therapy

CranioSacral Therapy or CST was pioneered and developed by osteopathic physician John E. Upledger following extensive scientific studies from 1975 to 1983 at Michigan State University, where he served as a clinical researcher and Professor of Biomechanics.

CST is a gentle, hands-on method of evaluating and enhancing the functioning of a physiological body system called the craniosacral

system - comprised of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. Using a soft touch generally no greater than 5 grams, or about the weight of a nickel, practitioners release restrictions in the craniosacral system to improve the functioning of the central nervous system.

By complementing the body's natural healing processes, CST is increasingly used as a preventive health measure for its ability to bolster resistance to disease, and is effective for a wide range of medical problems associated with pain and dysfunction, including:

Migraine Headaches

Motor-Coordination Impairments

Autism

Orthopedic Problems

Scoliosis

Learning Disabilities

Emotional Difficulties

Fibromyalgia

TMJ

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Chronic Neck and Back Pain

Colic

Central Nervous System Disorders

Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries

Infantile Disorders

Chronic Fatigue

Stress and Tension Related Problems

Connective-Tissue Disorders

Neurovascular or Immune Disorders

Post-Surgical Dysfunction

Medicare and the Payor Circuit

Medicare Alert!!

On September 1, 2008, Medicare changed their claims processing service provider from HealthNow to National Government Services. Up until that point, HealthNow, a service provider located in Binghamton processed all our Medicare claims, and did so in an efficient and accurate manner. Subsequent to September 1st, the ill-prepared and negligent transition from one claims processing organization to the other precipitated serious operating cash deficits for many medical practices in NYS, especially for Hematology-Oncology Associates of CNY.

Our practice is unique in that the majority of our expenses, in addition to staff, are chemotherapy drugs. The margin (profit) from drugs is very slim and the majority of reimbursement from our other medical oncology services are below what it costs our practice to render the service. This shortfall from Medicare is picked up by a combination of slim profit margins from other payors and technology based services that are paid above cost. We are very blessed to have the trust of our medical community and the resources to render excellence in patient care. Healthcare in our country, however, needs a great deal of rehabilitation and it becomes more difficult to render the value-added services that practices provide to their communities. Value added services are those services provided that are not paid for by insurance such as all the pre-authorizations of testing and drugs, phone triage, nutritional services, some social work services, integrative therapies, etc.

During these months of transition related to the processing of claims, Medicare continues to make huge blunders, and the cash flow of our operations and our financial security is put at risk. Through no fault of our own, this payment disaster necessitated the procurement of a bank loan of millions of dollars. The interest on this loan will be money that is spent needlessly.

It is important for our community to understand the challenges related to Medicare participation. Physician practices were saved from a 10% reduction in payments a few months ago and the future continues to remain uncertain. We must preserve this payment system for seniors so that medical practices in our country can sustain their operations and continue to participate with Medicare.



Congressman Walsh 423-5657 Senator Clinton 448-0470
Senator Schumer 423-5471