



HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY ASSOCIATES  
OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

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## Our Connection to You

2011– Volume 3  
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.



**Dr. Heidi Puc** adds the “American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine” to her repertoire of skills, wisdom and board certifications!

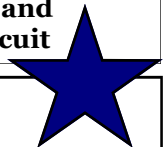
“Much change needs to happen in our current medical system structure to fully embrace this integrative holistic approach to healthcare ... but this is my passion and one by one, we will all “be the change we wish to see in this world.”

(Dr. Puc interview on page 2)

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### Quote for the Quarters



Analyses of others are actually expressions of our own needs and values.

~Marshall Rosenberg

## An Interview with Heidi S. Puc, M.D., FACP, ABIHM

**Q:** You are board certified in Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology and Hematology and recently, Integrative Holistic Medicine. What made you become interested in Integrative Holistic Medicine and pursue board certification?

**A:** My interest in integrative medicine truly began when I was introduced to meditation, Reiki and other “non-allopathic” techniques for my own self-healing. This, in addition to having many of my patients inquire about botanical or biologic supplements to assist in reducing chemotherapy side effects and for promoting well-being, prompted me to learn more about integrative medicine. I felt it was important to receive formal training in this, for my own confidence and for the level of trust and confidence my patients place in me. As I explored my options, I learned of a course through the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine in California, which in collaboration with the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine, allowed for such training and board certification for physicians. After a lengthy application process, a one-year intense self-study program and a week-long review course, I sat for the seven hour comprehensive board exam. It was an extremely enjoyable and fulfilling process, but the course work was demanding and the exam was quite difficult! I am happy to say that I am now a board certified Diplomate of the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine (ABIHM).

**Q:** How will you integrate this new knowledge and expertise into your Hematology and Oncology practice?

**A:** I am now focusing specifically on how to apply this knowledge to my practice. The principles of an integrative holistic medical practice include ten features.

- ◆ Optimal health or achieving a state of being fully alive, a condition of well-being transcending the mere absence or presence of disease
- ◆ Integrative Holistic Physicians strive to relate to patients with grace, kindness and acceptance with an attitude of unconditional love
- ◆ Wholeness: Illness is a dysfunction of the whole person—the mind, body and spirit. It is not just a physical disorder or random isolated event
- ◆ Integrative Physicians promote health, prevent illness and manage disease processes
- ◆ Integrative Physicians evoke the patient’s own innate healing power
- ◆ Integrative Physicians educate patients on healthy lifestyle changes and self-care, complementary approaches, and conventional drugs and surgery
- ◆ Relationship-Centered Care: The quality of the relationship between physician and patient is a major determinant of healing outcomes
- ◆ Individually, Integrative Physicians discern a patient’s uniqueness
- ◆ Teaching by example, Integrative Physicians continually work toward the personal incorporation of the principles of holistic health
- ◆ Profound learning opportunities for patients and physicians occur from all life experiences, including birth, illness, suffering, joy and the end of life process

**\*\*Continued on Page 7 \*\***



**CancerConnects** is pleased to continue their work to facilitate connections for everyone throughout Central New York who has been touched by cancer in some way. They are presenting two very special events with renowned author, psychologist, and inspirational speaker, Dr. Maria Sirois.

- ◆ Wednesday morning, October 19<sup>th</sup>, at the Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel, Dr. Sirois will be providing a workshop/training for medical and healthcare providers, caregivers, social workers, etc., who face the daily dilemma of maintaining health & wellness while providing care for those who are ill... *The Professional Caregiver Dilemma: How to Keep Yourself Whole While Caring for Those Who Suffer*. Dr. Maria Sirois will present the latest research, clinical anecdotes and moving stories to help us understand how to strengthen our resiliency, prevent compassion fatigue, sustain our sense of humor and create appropriate boundaries while doing impeccable work. Participants will return home reinvigorated and clear about the practices that will help them manage the stressors they face each day (at least one of which will involve serious laughter). CEU's are available!
- ◆ Thursday evening, October 20<sup>th</sup>, at the Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel, we'll be learning about life and *Playing It For Keeps* as we enjoy a delightful night of delicious cuisine, amazing friends and astonishing inspiration via Dr. Sirois, while raising funds in support of the remarkable folks in CNY on their cancer journey! The research, stories and humor of Dr. Sirois remind us how to fall in love with ourselves no matter the stressors in life, and how we craft a life that is healthy, sustaining and awe-filled.

For learn more about Dr. Sirois and her work, visit [www.mariasirois.com](http://www.mariasirois.com)  
 For more information about these events, please contact CancerConnects at (315) 634-5004  
 or via email at: [cancerconnects@gmail.com](mailto:cancerconnects@gmail.com)

*The new CancerConnects website is under construction and will be ready soon! [www.cancerconnects.org](http://www.cancerconnects.org)*

## North Medical Center –Practice Operations Change!

When infusion services ceased at North Medical Center last year, it was because safety in patient care is our number one priority and we were experiencing a staffing shortage. As the months passed, we began to recognize the efficiencies in operating one infusion center, as opposed to two, just seven miles apart. We continue to experience reimbursement challenges in all aspects of our practice. Medicare continues to eliminate payments, change reimbursement patterns, and offer significant challenges to our operations by decreasing our revenues. Because Medicare comprises almost 50 % of our patient mix, political agendas and government mandates have dramatic effects on our operations and future. At HOA, we continue to seek ways to posture ourselves to weather the reimbursement storm of the future. Our number one goal is to provide the highest level of care possible, while maintaining quality and safety standards for our patients. We also place great importance on providing a healthy and harmonious work environment where we can consistently reinvest in our employees, technologies and our future. We are grateful to our patients for their support of this change and we appreciate the trust placed in our care.

## For the Mind and Spirit

More Support for our Patients \* Free to All !!

### Support Group for Recurrent & Metastatic Disease

This support group is dedicated to providing guidance to those cancer patients with recurrent and metastatic 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 Connelly, RN, NP.

### *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.*

#### **American Cancer Society**

6725 Lyons St., East Syracuse

Call **1-800-227-2345**

July 25th	12:30 -2
Sept 26th	12:30-2
Oct 3rd	5:30-7
Oct 31st	12:30-2
Nov 7th	5:30-7
Nov 28th	12:30-2

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.

*If interested, please register with Gussie Sorensen at 315.472.7504 x 1119 or Belinda Tamoutselis at 315.472.7504 x1735*



### Caregivers Support Group

This group provides support for caregivers of cancer patients and provides a place for discussion regarding ongoing challenges that are encountered with the caregiver role. The groups meet the 1st & 3rd Friday of each month from noon—1pm in the 3rd Floor Boardroom located at our Brittonfield Office. The group is facilitated by Gussie Sorensen, LCSW-R and Kathy Snyder, RN, NP.

# Congratulations to **Dr. Joseph Navone**—Board Certification in Hospice and Palliative Care!

**\*\* An Interview with Dr. Navone \*\***



**Q: Why did you decide to pursue this new board certification?**

A: I decided to become board certified in Hospice and Palliative Care mainly because I have been incorporating the principles of palliative care in my practice of Oncology for many years. After 2012, a fellowship will be required for this board certification and it seemed a logical conclusion to take the exam with over 20 years of hospice and palliative care experience, prior to the implementation of that requirement.

**Q: How will you integrate this new board certification into your oncology practice?**

A: I feel that I can be of significant help to my patients with advanced cancer by having an expanded knowledge base in the area of palliative care. I have always found it a challenge to manage the complex issues associated with end of life and very rewarding when patients are eased into this life stage. Throughout my career as a medical oncologist, I have felt that it is as important to touch on the subject of end of life as it is to discuss the therapeutic options for treating the underlying advanced cancer. Additionally, I have realized that I will not be able to withstand the intensity of medical oncology practice as I get older and as a way to “slow down”, I could transition into a hospital-based palliative care program or work as or with a medical director for a hospice program.

## Clinical Research Department

### What is a CCOP?

A Community Clinical Oncology Program allows a medical practice to work with the National Cancer Institute to formally access clinical research trials and cancer control and prevention studies for patient participation. Through our CCOP, our staff and patients have had the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of cancer care and prevention since 1986! There are about 50 CCOPs in the United States and only 2 in New York State. Hematology-Oncology Associates and a practice on Long Island. We're so proud of that fact! HOACNY is the only CCOP in the country not affiliated with a large cancer center or university—a well kept secret!

This National Cancer Institute partnership allows our practice to bring cutting edge clinical trials and cancer control and prevention studies to Syracuse, New York. We can offer investigational drug therapies and cutting edge treatments to our patients—and they don't need to travel to Philadelphia, Buffalo, Rochester, Texas, Boston, Minnesota or New York City!

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



# The Wellness Center



A beautiful and healing atmosphere is provided as a haven of opportunity for the mind, body and spirit. Check out the Wellness Center's schedule of classes and services on the web!

[www.hoacny.com](http://www.hoacny.com) — Wellness Center

## Hematology-Oncology Associates Comprehensive Outpatient 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
- ◇ Art Therapy
- ◇ Community Educational Programs

### **Amenities**

- ◇ State of the Art Facilities
- ◇ Imaging Services
- ◇ Boutique at Brittonfield
- ◇ Flat Screen TV's in Infusion
- ◇ Patient Internet Access in Infusion
- ◇ Free Parking
- ◇ Patient Education Area
- ◇ Electronic Medical Record

## CyberKnife® News!



Hematology-Oncology Associates

The **only** provider of

CyberKnife® services in Central New York!

### Prostate Cancer and the CyberKnife®

HOA was involved in a nationwide study to assess the efficacy of the CyberKnife for the treatment of prostate cancer. Five year data of CyberKnife prostate radiosurgery is very promising and comparable to Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) —one of the current standards for treatment. In fact, the CyberKnife may revolutionize prostate treatments. In addition to being more precise and as effective as IMRT, CyberKnife prostate radiosurgery is completed in 5 treatments, typically in 1 calendar week—as compared to 43 treatments or 8–10 weeks of IMRT. The CyberKnife provides a unique and promising treatment for early stage prostate cancer. For more information please contact one of our radiation oncologists or physicists.

## 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	Reiki	Healing Touch	Vibrational Healing
Acupuncture	Yoga	CranioSacral Therapy	Foot Reflexology

*Offered at our Brittonfield Office & The Wellness Center at Medical Center West*

*—Please call Anne at 234-4673 to set up an appointment —*

## An Interview with Heidi S. Puc, M.D., FACP, ABIHM

(Continued from Page 2)

**Q:** How have your physician partners responded to this philosophy and training?

**A:** Our mission statement includes the words, “... highest level of quality care in a healing environment for the mind, body and spirit of patients dealing with cancer and blood disorders.” Our practice was the first oncology practice in Central New York to develop a Complementary/Integrative/Wellness program. Our program will be 9 years old in February of 2012. In addition, HOA provides an incredible gift to our patients and the community through our Wellness Center located in Camillus (Medical Center West). My partners have been fully supportive of my training and we are in the process of incorporating this expertise into my practice. My partners have referred a number of patients to me for an Integrative Holistic consult. The management of the patient’s care will always remain with their HOA physician but I am happy and honored to be able to provide an integrative consultation. I do emphasize to my patients that this is a complementary, rather than an alternative approach to traditional oncologic and hematologic management. We have only just begun to learn how to integrate this specialty into our practice but we will continue to explore ways to enrich the process.

**Q:** Do you have to recertify in this discipline, as you have to with your Hematology and Oncology Boards? Is there also a Continuing education requirement?

**A:** A requirement of ABIHM is that recertification is done every seven years. The certification maintenance process consists of documenting 120 hours of category I CME credits with an emphasis of integrative holistic content over the seven year span, submission of a case history and test questions from the ABIHM syllabus.

# Medicare and the Payor Circuit

Congresswoman Ann Marie Buerkle 423-5657

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand 448-0470

Senator Charles Schumer 423-5471

As the deadline to raise the federal debt ceiling looms, the White House and Congress are continuing negotiations to reach a compromise. Included as part of the increasingly heated negotiations are several proposals that would cut Medicare and Medicaid spending. One such proposal would generate \$3 billion in Medicare Part B savings by reducing the reimbursement of physician-administered drugs and biologics from average sales price (ASP) + 6% to ASP + 4%. As so many Medicare services are unpaid, this decrease would significantly effect our practice, as well as any independent oncology practice in the country.

The proposal, one of some 30 proposed cuts collectively totaling \$353 billion, has been met with an outpouring of concern, particularly among community cancer providers and patients. The origin of the proposal, which caught stakeholders off guard, is not clear, but has been circulating among the press.

In response to this proposal to change the ASP-based formula, a coalition of oncology and cancer care advocacy groups and industry stakeholders sent letters to President Obama and congressional leaders on July 13 warning that the **cuts would severely weaken cancer care and pose access concerns.**

Chief among the concerns is that such a proposal would be the "tipping point" forcing many private physicians to close their practices—a trend that has already begun. The letter to the Administration is part of a significant mobilization effort to ensure the proposal doesn't make it into the final debt-reduction package. Payor studies demonstrate that Physician practices that have been transitioned to hospital based practices increase total costs by 35—40% because of the overhead and bureaucracy associated with large institutions. This is not the answer for our country!

**Important Note to Patients: Please DO NOT change your Medicare plan before you call us ... (315) 234-2812**

**It appears that there are sales representatives from Medicare Advantage Plans and Medicare Replacement Plans working diligently to convince older adults to transition from the traditional Medicare program to these Managed Medicare plans. They convince people that the premium savings make the decision simple. In truth, however, two significant issues result. One is that some plans offer few to zero participating doctors and hospitals in Onondaga County. The other significant issue arises when a person gets sick and needs expensive medical treatment. The out of pocket costs far exceed any premium savings. Be wise and check into all the aspects of a new plan and please call our office as we are happy to assist you. We're in this together!**

Difficult decisions regarding access to care have been precipitated by legislative changes. Insurance companies would like to emulate the Medicare changes that continue to challenge and stress our patient services. **Together**, we can prevent this. The need to critically assess every insurance company's reimbursement is now mandated by medical practices. We can no longer participate with every insurance company. We will not allow the level of care or expertise you have come to expect and trust be diminished. Please stay connected and support our decisions to fight for you—our valued patients. When open enrollment comes to your employer— please make sure you sign up for an insurance we participate with—taking care of **you** is very important to us!