

# THE SPECIALIST



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## EDITION HIGHLIGHTS

**10** Mammograms  
Why You Should Schedule Yours Today.

**29** James's Cancer Battle  
James Takes Us Inside His Personal Battle With Breast Cancer as a Male.

**35** NY Imaging Excellence  
NYI was named a Prostate Cancer MRI Center of Excellence.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

### My Friends,

Welcome to the August edition of The Specialist, where we delve into the very essence of healthcare - compassion, empowerment, and knowledge.

In this edition, we share a deeply moving patient story of a courageous individual navigating a male breast cancer diagnosis with resilience and hope. His journey serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of early detection and support in the face of cancer as we seek to raise awareness about this rare disease.

We also emphasize the significance of scheduling mammogram screenings for women. Early detection remains a crucial tool in the fight against breast cancer, and we encourage every woman to prioritize their health and well-being.

Exploring the power of kindness in healthcare practice, we celebrate the profound impact of simple acts of compassion - from a nurse's reassuring smile to a physician's comforting words.

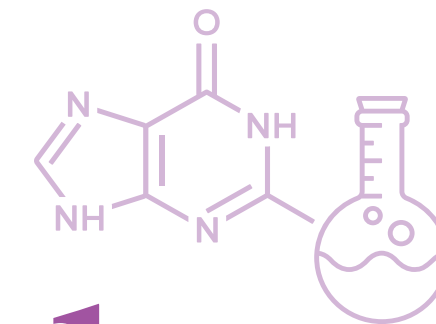
Additionally, we shed light on how the Buddy System fosters camaraderie and emotional support among patients participating in clinical trials. We take a look at the impact fibroids have on women's health and the available treatment options. As the debate surrounding aspartame and its potential link to cancer continues, we strive to provide clarity on this conflicting topic, empowering readers to make informed dietary decisions.

With lots more information inside these pages, we encourage you to take proactive steps in maintaining your health. Whether scheduling a mammogram or staying informed, each action contributes to a healthier and happier you.

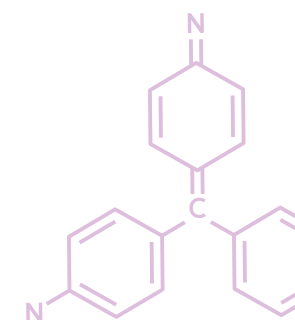
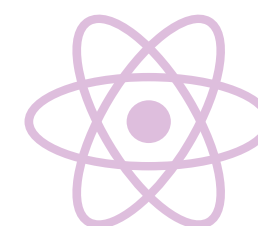
Thank you for being a part of our community, and we look forward to continuing this journey together. As always, we are here to support you every step of the way.

Warm regards,  
**Dr. V**





SECTION **1** Health  
ONCOLOGY & MORE



# Acts of Empathy:

## The Transformative Power of Kindness in Healthcare Practice



**MiaBianca Lopez**

In the fast-paced and often demanding world of healthcare, it is easy to overlook the significance of empathy and kindness in patient care. However, a recent incident at the Eastchester Cancer Care location serves as a poignant reminder of the transformative power of compassion on patients and their families. MiaBianca Lopez, a compassionate Unit Coordinator, demonstrated exceptional empathy by selflessly offering her own birthday floral arrangement to a distraught caregiver.

Moved by the caregiver's circumstances, MiaBianca wanted to provide a source of solace and comfort. Without any expectations, she presented the flowers, following her intuition to take action.

The caregiver's reaction surpassed MiaBianca's expectations, filled with gratitude and appreciation. It reminded us that even the smallest acts of kindness can affect someone's life.

Healthcare extends beyond physical ailments; it involves acknowledging patients' and their loved ones' emotional and psychological needs. Empathy forms the foundation of meaningful connections between healthcare providers and those under their care. MiaBianca's spontaneous gesture alleviated the caregiver's distress and created a sense of support and comfort during a challenging time, proving that empathy can be a powerful tool in healing.

MiaBianca's commitment to treating others with the same care and respect for herself permeates all aspects of her life. She recognizes the influence of empathy and kindness in healthcare settings. She believes empathy and kindness contribute immeasurably to a patient's overall well-being and satisfaction when receiving care.

MiaBianca's selflessness serves as a testament to the importance of compassion in healthcare. By seizing the opportunity to make a positive impact, even during busy and challenging times, she exemplifies the values that should underpin every interaction between healthcare providers and those in their care. Her genuine concern and thoughtful gesture alleviated the caregiver's burdens and demonstrated the profound difference empathy and kindness can make in a person's life.

MiaBianca's act of kindness not only impacted the caregiver and patient directly involved but also resonated with those who witnessed the event. Small acts of kindness have a ripple effect, inspiring others to follow suit. By nurturing a culture of empathy, healthcare professionals can positively influence the lives of countless patients and their families, fostering a chain reaction of compassion.

While medical treatment is undeniably critical, the emotional support and understanding healthcare providers provide can greatly enhance a patient's well-being. Theodore Roosevelt's words, "No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care," ring true in healthcare practice. Showing empathy and kindness allows patients to feel seen, heard, and valued as individuals, not just as medical cases. Such gestures can alleviate anxiety, build trust, and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

Beyond the clinical aspects, it is essential to remember the power of compassion and its lasting impact on patients and their families. By incorporating empathy and kindness into daily practice, healthcare providers can elevate the quality of care, create a more supportive healing environment, and truly make a difference in the lives they touch.



# The NYCBS Buddy System's

## Impact on Clinical Trial Journeys



*Left to Right: Joanna Gromadzki, Kim Nadler, Lauren Gianelli, LPN, and Kristen Roach, LPN.*

Kim's decision to participate in a clinical trial at New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS) provided her with innovative treatment options and connected her with a compassionate support system. Knowing that Kim would have many questions about the clinical trial, the NYCBS Research Coordinators offered her

the opportunity to be matched to a "buddy" who was already enrolled in the same trial. Through the NYCBS Buddy System, Kim was partnered with Laura, a fellow participant who had already undergone several treatment cycles. Their friendship and shared experiences became instrumental in navigating

the challenges and uncertainties of the clinical trial journey.

Upon being diagnosed with follicular lymphoma, Kim's journey led her to NYCBS. Originally set to receive standard treatment, she was approached with the opportunity to participate in a clinical trial. As a science-

oriented individual who strongly believed in the importance of clinical trials, Kim's decision to join was a resounding yes. The trial aimed to test a new administration method for a proven effective drug, aligning perfectly with her beliefs.

### The Role of the Buddy System:

Kim's initial fears and concerns were alleviated through her partnership with Laura, who had significant experience with the trial. Laura's firsthand knowledge and understanding of the treatment process helped Kim overcome the uncertainties often accompanying such medical journeys. The Buddy System provided a valuable support network, offering practical insights, reassurance, and emotional comfort. Kim's decision to participate became even more empowering with Laura's guidance and friendship.

Kim and Laura shared

numerous conversations throughout the trial that left lasting impressions. One memorable moment was when Kim experienced unusual peeling of her hands during her third treatment cycle. In a heartwarming and reassuring gesture, Laura shared a picture of her own hands from a few months earlier, demonstrating that she had encountered a similar experience. This simple exchange provided Kim with a sense of understanding and solidarity, reminding her that she was not alone in her journey.

While Kim's friendship with Laura did not undergo significant changes during the trial, their connection remained a constant source of support. The bond they formed through shared experiences and mutual understanding was invaluable, providing a safe space for open dialogue and empathetic companionship. In a clinical trial setting, having someone

who truly comprehends the challenges and triumphs can make a world of difference.

Kim emphasizes the immense value of having a network of individuals going through similar experiences in a research setting. While doctors and Research Coordinators can provide medical insights, a patient's perspective is uniquely comforting. Sharing experiences, overcoming fears, and witnessing others thrive through challenges foster a sense of hope and empowerment. Support networks provide emotional solace and serve as a wellspring of practical advice and encouragement.

As Kim continues her journey, she remains grateful for the empowering relationships and the comfort she finds in knowing she is part of a community dedicated to advancing medical knowledge and improving patient outcomes.

# Why You Should Schedule Your Mammogram

Did you know you don't need a referral or prescription from your doctor to get a

mammogram? It's true!

Women over 40 who are not experiencing symptoms can take the initiative to schedule their annual mammogram.

Why is this important? Annual mammograms are the best tool for early detection of breast cancer, and most cancers detected by mammography have no symptoms.

Recently, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued new recommendations for breast cancer screening. These recommendations lowered the age at which women should start screening from 50 to 40 years old. They also recommend screening mammograms every other year from ages 40 to 74.

Why are these recommendations important? It's important to understand that there isn't a consensus on screening guidelines, as different organizations weigh the benefits of screening against potential harms like false positives and overtreatment. These differences highlight

the unique perspectives and approaches of each organization. While the USPSTF's recommended age change to 40 is significant progress toward a consensus, some experts believe annual screening is critically important. Annual screening improves the chance of a cure, reduces the need for extensive treatments, and ultimately enhances the quality of life for women diagnosed with breast cancer.

If you are in your 40s and haven't started screening, it's essential to have a conversation with your doctor about your personal risk for breast cancer and determine an ideal screening schedule during your next appointment. On the other hand, if you're under 40, it's recommended to have a breast cancer risk assessment by age 25. This assessment, especially for Black women and women of Ashkenazi

Jewish ancestry, helps identify individuals with a higher risk for the disease and may warrant earlier screening.

Ultimately, stay informed about the latest screening recommendations, consult your healthcare provider, and be proactive in monitoring your breast health. Pay attention to any changes in your breasts and report any suspicious findings to your doctor. By taking control of your health and being proactive about screenings, you empower yourself with knowledge and increase the chances of early detection, which can save lives.

Remember, your health is a priority, and scheduling your mammogram can make a significant difference in detecting breast cancer early.

# Uterine Fibroids

## What are they?

Uterine Fibroids, also known as leiomyomas, are non-cancerous masses that develop within the wall of the uterus. Fibroids affect many women during their reproductive years.

They come in various numbers and sizes and can range from asymptomatic to causing severe symptoms.

### Common Symptoms of Fibroids

Approximately 1 out of 3 women with fibroids experience heavy or prolonged bleeding during their periods which is known as menorrhagia. This can lead to anemia (low blood counts) which can cause weakness, dizziness and fainting. Other possible symptoms include:

- Pelvic pain or pressure
- Frequent urination
- Constipation
- Backache
- Pain during intercourse
- Complications during pregnancy and labor



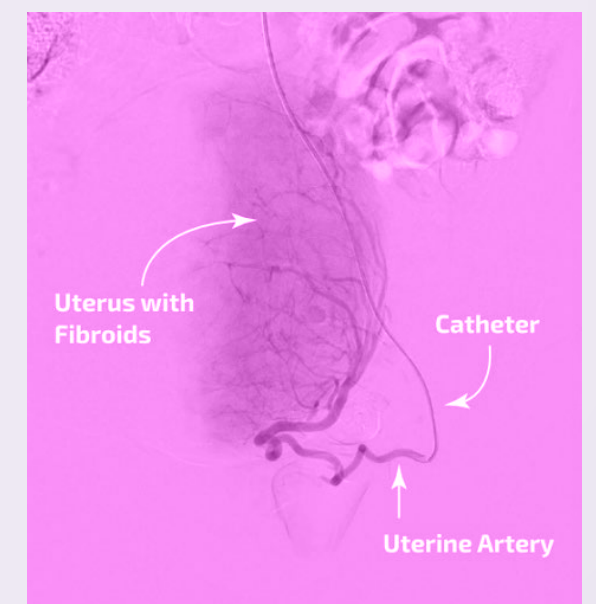
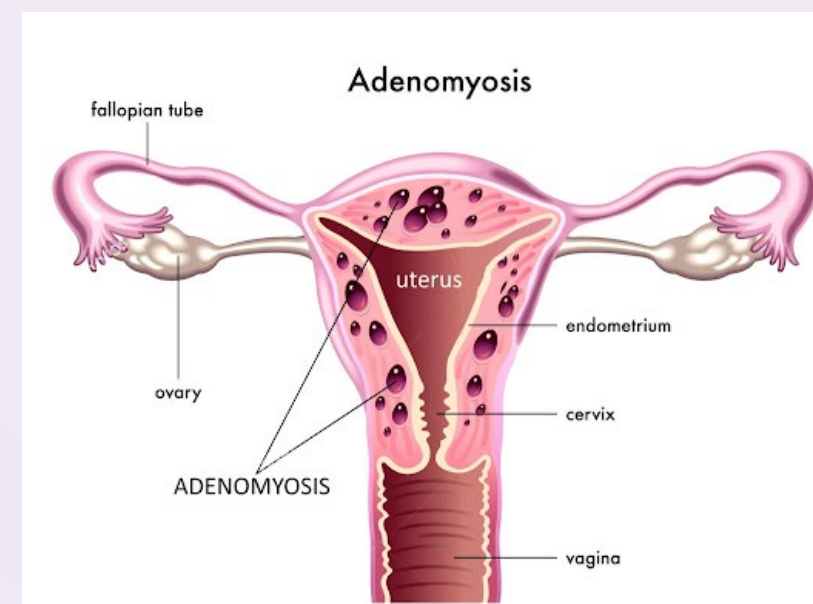
### Treatment Options

Treatment options for fibroids depend on various factors, including the size and location of the fibroids, the severity of symptoms, and a woman's age and reproductive plans. At NY Health, we offer minimally invasive and effective fibroid treatment options, providing patients with relief and a quicker recovery compared to traditional surgical approaches.

### Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE) /Uterine Artery Embolization (UAE)

This procedure involves guiding a small angiographic catheter into the uterine arteries and injecting tiny particles to decrease blood flow to the uterus. Uterine fibroid embolization offers advantages over conventional hormonal suppression and surgical methods, avoiding side effects of drug therapy and the physical and psychological trauma of surgery. Patients can typically resume their regular activities several weeks earlier than after a hysterectomy. Uterine fibroid embolization, along with other options like hysteroscopic resection, myolysis, and laparoscopic myomectomy, widens the treatment choices for patients who wish to avoid hysterectomy.

*Another common condition in women that often goes untreated is adenomyosis. Adenomyosis happens when the inner lining of your uterus, also known as endometrial tissue, grows into the muscular wall of your uterus. UFE and UAE help women suffering from adenomyosis and fibroids to avoid hysterectomy, allows them to keep their uterus, preserve fertility, and avoid the risks and long recovery times associated with major surgery. If you have questions about the procedure and the use of uterine artery embolization to treat adenomyosis or uterine fibroids, talk to your doctor or give us a call.*



# A More Comfortable Mammogram? Yes.

One of the many myths about mammograms is that they hurt — and your breast size affects the intensity. While mammograms do cause compression, similar to a blood pressure cuff, which may result in a bit of discomfort, they should not be painful or a reason for skipping this important screening. In fact, breast cancer mortality rates have dropped 30 percent since doctors started using them.

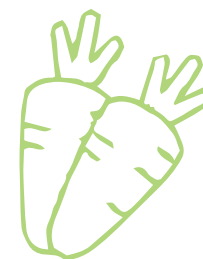
A woman's breast size also has no effect. However, other factors such as menstrual cycle or caffeine consumption could cause breast tenderness. So what happens if you do feel pain? Tell your technologist immediately.

During your visit, a technologist will position your breast between two plastic plates and compress the plates to take a picture. The technologist can work with you to better position your breast if you feel any discomfort. With 3D mammography, the machine rotates in an arc around the compressed breast, capturing multiple images from different angles. For some women, this is a more comfortable experience. Each compression takes about 10 to 20 seconds, with the entire screening taking about 20 minutes.

Knowing some women skip receiving a mammogram altogether because they are worried it will hurt shows an even greater need for women to be aware of their options. Enhanced mammography technology designed to be more patient-friendly with features like personalized compression and soft breast paddles—even spa-like suites to help you relax during your mammogram—do exist!

The next time you speak to your health care provider about getting your mammogram, ask them about all of your options. But remember, the only thing worse than getting a mammogram is not getting one. Mammograms save lives, and if you suffer from mammogram anxiety, consider bringing a friend or loved one with you to your next visit. You may just be the reminder they need to get one of their own.





SECTION

# 2 Wellness

NUTRITION & MORE





# An Extra Layer of Care

By MaryAnn Fragola, DNP, ANPc, ACHPN  
Clinical Director of Supportive and Palliative Care



When I first see a patient, I often explain the palliative role as an extra layer of support in their care. I do this first to alleviate any fears but, more importantly, to emphasize that we work as a team alongside the primary oncologist to benefit the patient. Doing so creates a relationship that fosters patient-centered care and reassures patients and caregivers that decisions are being shared amongst the providers, ultimately building trust. I typically see reassurance when this is explained as such because they have built so much trust with the oncologist.

Working as a team allows us to support all the aspects essential in the overall care of any patient, no matter the diagnosis. What we often forget is that these elements play a role in how patients make decisions on proceeding with treatment. Palliative care addresses quality of life and suffering but involves taking care of issues beyond physical symptoms. Psychosocial, spiritual, and emotional support are also just as important as physical treatment in most cases, and by addressing these needs, as part of a whole-person, holistic approach to the palliative care journey, we can ensure that they are able to appreciate a better quality of life and be involved in the decision-making process.

The palliative care team spends the time it takes to help match the treatment choices that are in line with specific goals of care. Caregivers are included in this process as they often bear a large care burden. Delivering palliative care requires skill, compassion, a good listening ear, and a level of comfort with topics most



people would rather avoid. Palliative care is an extra layer of care in addition to what patients and families receive from their primary provider, and there is a large amount of evidence suggesting that palliative care enhances the quality of life, reduces healthcare costs, and even helps people live longer. The goals are working together, interdisciplinary as part of a team to manage distressing symptoms, address emotional and spiritual support, and offer guidance.

My role as a palliative and supportive provider will always be to try to help people with a chronic illness, comfort them, listen to them, and allow them to live as well as they can, for as long as they can.

1. <https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2015/03/an-extra-layer-of-care>

# My Sicilian Summer

## A Journey of Healthy Eating

By Michelle Slowey, MA, RDN, CDCES, CDN



I traveled to the island of Sicily this summer to visit my family, who live in a small town called Salemi. I was surrounded by lots of family, food, and love, with the backdrop of majestic mountains and the bluest of waters. Meals were a cherished family event.

My cousin Caterina's kitchen became my favorite place to be. It was a time to gather and enjoy freshly prepared lunches and dinners that usually began with toasty bread, flavorful cheese, olives, and meat. We ate fresh pasta that was delicately dressed with a touch of basil, garlic, olive oil, crushed almonds, and diced tomatoes. A presentation of

swordfish with sauteed zucchini and roasted potatoes came before dessert. Dessert ranged from sweet plums, gelato, granita, almond paste cookies, cannolis, or a bit of everything.

The pistachio nut is utilized in practically every kind of dish, including plates of pasta, meats, sauce, rice, and all kinds of desserts, especially my favorite— gelato. Espresso is everywhere. You will have an espresso at home first thing in the morning. Like the British may drink tea several times a day, espresso is served 4-5 times a day in adorable little cups and provides quite the caffeine kick. Since the mediterranean sea

surrounds Sicily, it's not surprising that fish is a mainstay. It is sauteed, grilled, breaded, and added to pasta and pizza. Lemon is squeezed on top, olive oil is drizzled on, and crushed garlic tops it off.

Bread is life in Italy. Loaves of fresh bread are served with all three meals: Pizza, pasta, and croissants. Carbohydrates are everywhere. I was not concerned because I was on holiday. Also, portion control and moderation are always a thought in my head.

When I put on my dietitian hat, I noticed one constant in Sicily. The food is fresh. You just need to look out the window to be reminded of



this. There were rows of picture-perfect grape vines. The olive and fig trees were abundant. Everyone appeared to have a room full of freshly picked tomatoes in their home. They were all preparing to make "the sauce." My cousins use an electric tomato mill to make the tomato sauce that will be cooked with all kinds of pasta dishes throughout the year.

Fresh fruit, vegetables, garlic, nuts, olives, and fish are straight from the sea. This is all part of the Mediterranean diet. The fish meals, rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, provide cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory benefits. Pistachios will give you a healthy dose of Vitamin B6. They are rich in protein, fiber, and healthy fats. Tomatoes are rich in antioxidants and, when processed into sauce, increase their cancer-protective properties, including vitamins A and C, fiber, potassium, and carotenoids such as lycopene.

This was a vacation I will never forget. What stands out most is the precious time spent with my family, whom I love dearly.

Below is my own version of pistachio pesto sauce, which was one of my favorite dishes.

### Pistachio Pesto Sauce

1 cup of fresh basil  
1/2 cup pistachios  
2 garlic cloves  
1/4 cup pistachio oil  
1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese  
salt and pepper to taste

-Pulse all ingredients in a food processor.  
-Add a tbsp more oil to thin out the sauce if needed.  
-Add to hot pasta and enjoy.

Buon Appetito!

# Does Aspartame Cause Cancer?

**Aspartame, the popular artificial sweetener found in numerous food and beverage products, has long been debated regarding its potential link to cancer. Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) released reports that shed light on this issue, presenting conflicting statements that have left many people questioning the safety of aspartame, the sugar-free sweetener found in low-calorie foods.**

The WHO's statements on aspartame reflect the opinions of two separate groups within the organization. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), focused on identifying cancer-causing agents, classified aspartame as "possibly carcinogenic," suggesting some evidence of its potential to cause cancer in humans. However, this classification does not imply a definitive link or guarantee that consuming aspartame will lead to cancer.

On the other hand, the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives, responsible for assessing the safety of food additives, concluded that no changes are currently required to the recommended limit of aspartame intake. They maintained that the acceptable daily intake is quite high,

and there is no immediate cause for concern. For aspartame, this limit is set at 40 milligrams per kilogram of body weight per day. To put it into perspective, an average adult would need to consume an excessive amount of diet soda (around nine to 14 cans per day) to exceed this limit, assuming no additional aspartame intake from other sources. As with any food or beverage, moderation remains key.

**There is no substantial evidence suggesting that sugar or non-sugar sweeteners directly increase cancer risk or negatively affect treatment response. However, it is recommended to limit sugary beverages and other foods high in added sugars as this can help avoid excess calorie intake and subsequently, potential weight gain that may increase the risk of several cancers. Moreover, by doing so, there is more room to consume nutrient-rich foods that contribute to overall good health.**

IARC and WHO will continue to track emerging evidence and encourage independent research groups to conduct additional studies exploring the potential association between aspartame exposure and its effects on consumer health.

## Summer Pasta Salad

A Burst of Seasonal Delight

Patricia Salvio, BS, RDN, CNSC, CDN

*As the summer heat embraces us, it's time to enjoy the season's bounty with a healthy and satisfying Summer Pasta Salad. Pairing whole grains and fiber-rich vegetables with a light zesty dressing makes for a vibrant meal packed with nutrition. Dive into this refreshing dish and let the goodness of seasonal foods nourish your body while keeping you cool!*

### Ingredients (Serves 8):

- 8 oz Whole Wheat Bowtie Pasta, dry
- 2 cup Cherry Tomatoes, halved
- 2 cup Cucumbers, sliced
- 1 cup Red Onions, thinly sliced
- 8 ounces Mozzarella Balls
- 1/4 cup Fresh Parsley, chopped

### Dressing:

- 2 tablespoon Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 tablespoon Red Wine Vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon Salt
- 1/4 teaspoon Black Pepper
- 2 tablespoon Salt-Free Italian Seasoning
- 1 clove Garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon Honey

### Instructions:

1. Cook the whole wheat pasta according to the package instructions (1 minute longer than aldente instructions for better dressing absorption!), then rinse it under cold water and let it cool completely.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cooled pasta, halved cherry tomatoes, sliced cucumbers, red onions, mozzarella balls, and chopped parsley.
3. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt, pepper, Italian dressing, minced garlic, and honey until well combined.
4. Drizzle the dressing over the pasta salad and gently toss to coat all the ingredients evenly.
5. Allow the salad to chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, enhancing the flavors and textures.

### Nutrition Facts:

Servings: 8  
Serving Size: 1 cup

- Calories: 220 kcal
- Total Fat: 9g
- Saturated Fat: 3g
- Cholesterol: 15 mg
- Sodium: 177 mg



## Summer Pasta Salad

### Ingredients:

- 2 avocados pitted, peeled and diced
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 1 medium cucumber peeled and diced
- 1 bell pepper (orange, yellow, red or green)
- 1 small red onion diced
- 3 tbsp. honey
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Lemon juice to taste

### Directions

- Add vegetables to bowl
- Mix honey, olive oil, red wine vinegar, lemon juice, salt and pepper in separate bowl
- Pour dressing over vegetables and toss to combine

***This salad is best served chilled.***



SECTION

# 3 Stories

PATIENT & FAMILY



# James's Battle with Breast Cancer

When James was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997 at 36-years-old, he didn't think he would live to reach age 40. But 25 years after his diagnosis, surrounded by friends and family, the American Cancer Society's 2023 Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk became an unexpected celebration of all he had endured during his journey with cancer.

James first noticed a lump on his right breast while showering nearly three decades ago and immediately knew he needed to get it checked out. After some tests, including a scan and a biopsy, his life changed in a big way when he was diagnosed with breast cancer.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think I could get breast cancer," he says. The diagnosis came as a shock, particularly because there is not a ton of education about breast cancer in men and many men don't even realize they can get breast cancer. He feels fortunate that during this

challenging time, his brother-in-law Bob and his late sister Anna helped him find an amazing physician—Dr. Rita Weiss, who is a board certified hematologist-



oncologist at New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS).

When James was first diagnosed, Dr. Weiss encouraged him to fight hard. And that's exactly what he did. With two very young children at home, he put everything he could into staying alive to be there for his family. "I said to myself—

I'm not going to feel sorry for myself, I'm just going to just take care of business and do what I have to do."

Now, James' son is 26 and his daughter is 29. He's grateful that he was able to watch them grow and be there for some of life's most important moments, like walking his daughter down the aisle at her wedding last year. He was also touched to have many of his family and friends—including members of his local fire department where he's an honorary member—by his side at the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk. As a testament to their support, they wore buttons that said "Jim's Breast Friends," which brought tears to his eyes. His fire company Engine Co#4 was also very supportive and dedicated breast cancer awareness shirts to him.

"You can't give up hope," James says, reflecting back on his journey. "It's something that Dr. Weiss taught me—she taught me how to stay positive."

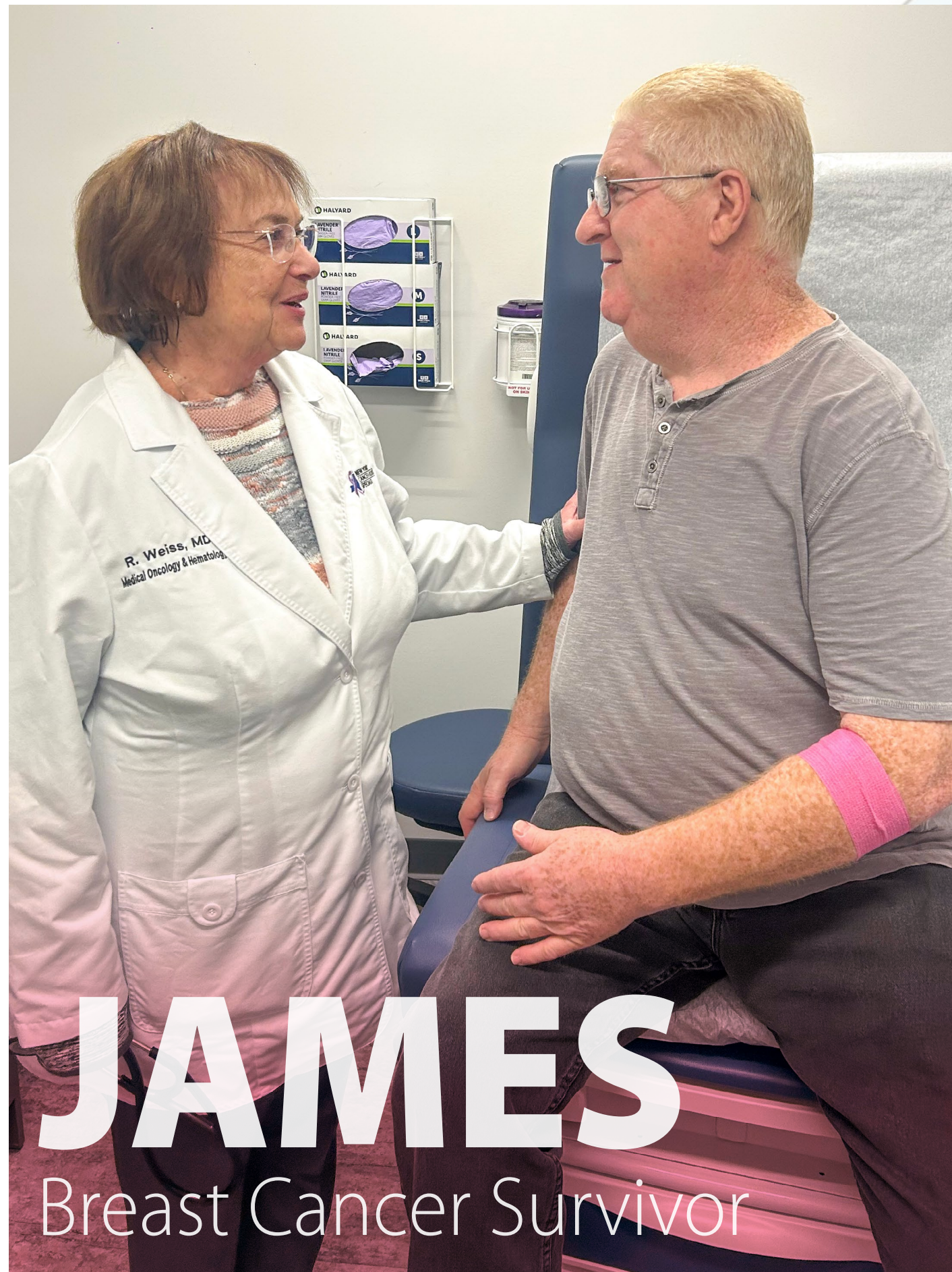


From his first appointment with Dr. Weiss, James immediately felt at ease. At a time when he was so scared and unsure of what he was up against, she always treated him like a human and never like a statistic. She encouraged him to remain

hopeful and even helped explain James' diagnosis to his 3-year-old daughter." It was such a beautiful thing," he says. "She is probably one of the most compassionate and thorough doctors that

you can ever ask for."

After thoughtfully guiding James' treatment and follow-up care for 26 years, including chemotherapy and



# JAMES

## Breast Cancer Survivor



a modified mastectomy, Dr. Weiss has become more than a doctor to James— she's also his friend. "She told me when I was going through chemo that she was going to be with me every step of the way and she was," he says. "She's a credit to her profession."

Now, at 62, James is dedicated to educating people in his life about male breast cancer. He wants others to understand that

even though breast cancer isn't as common among men, it's still possible.

He encourages friends and family to check themselves for breast cancer and to take action if they detect something abnormal or suspicious. He also wants men to know that mammograms are an important breast cancer screening tool, and not just for women. They're currently

recommended for men who have symptoms or are at high risk for breast cancer.

James is an open book when it comes to talking about cancer with others, and he hopes others can benefit from hearing about his experience. "That's my goal, for somebody to benefit and not have to go through what I went through."

SECTION **4** Bulletin  
NEWS & UPDATES





# Seetha R. Murukutla MD, FACP

## Joins New York Cancer & Blood Specialists

**New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS), one of the nation's leading oncology practices, is proud to announce the addition of board-certified hematologist-oncologist Seetha R. Murukutla, MD, FACP. She will practice at 1384 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10301.**

"We are very excited to welcome Dr. Murukutla to our practice," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO of NYCBS. "Her addition will enhance the quality of patient care in Staten Island, further solidifying our commitment to providing world-class cancer care."

Dr. Murukutla is committed to delivering the most advanced, evidence-based cancer treatments to ensure optimal therapy outcomes and provide exceptional care within the community. With a focus on general oncology, she offers comprehensive treatment for all types of cancer, excluding bone marrow transplants. Dr. Murukutla specializes in treating adult hematologic conditions, including leukemias. As an Attending Physician at Richmond University Medical Center and Staten Island University Hospital, she actively teaches medical residents and oncology fellows.

Dr. Murukutla received her medical degree in Medicine and Surgery from Osmania University in Hyderabad, India. She completed an internship and residency in Internal Medicine at Brooklyn Hospital. She completed Hematology/Oncology Fellowships at Brooklyn Hospital and Brookdale Hospital. Dr. Murukutla speaks English, Telugu, and Hindi.

**To make an appointment with Dr. Murukutla, please call (718) 273-2277.**



NYIS, has been named a Prostate Cancer MRI Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology



**This recognition is granted to imaging facilities with full accreditation in all body MR-imaging programs, including specialized prostate imaging. The ACR's gold seal recognizes centers that have met the high-quality MR prostate imaging standards for personnel, equipment, quality assurance and quality control procedure requirements for patient safety. The accreditation sets NY Imaging Specialists apart as a leader in providing world-class prostate cancer care.**

"Being named a Prostate Cancer MRI Center of Excellence reflects the knowledge and skill of our MR imaging technologists and radiologists. It is a testament to our robust prostate MRI program and highlights the dedication we have towards providing world-class care," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO.

Prostate MRI has changed the paradigm of prostate cancer diagnosis. Over the last couple of decades, its utilization has steadily increased, becoming an integral part of diagnosing and treating patients with suspected or confirmed prostate cancer. It is now employed from the initial cancer detection to defining the most appropriate treatment for patients and evaluating disease recurrence. Additionally, MRI can rule out the presence of clinically significant prostate cancers, preventing many men from having an unnecessary invasive biopsy procedure and mitigating the overdiagnosis and overtreatment of insignificant cancers.

The ACR is a national professional organization serving more than 36,000 diagnostic and interventional radiologists, radiation oncologists, nuclear medicine physicians and medical physicists with programs focusing on the practice of medical imaging, radiation oncology and the delivery of comprehensive health care services. Founded in 1924, the ACR is one of the largest and most influential medical associations in the United States. The ACR devotes its resources to making imaging and radiation therapy safe, effective and accessible to those who need it.

**For more information, visit [nyimaging.com](http://nyimaging.com).**



## Opens Brand New Multispecialty Center in Port Jefferson Station

**NY Imaging Specialists announced the opening of its new location inside the 10,000-square-foot state-of-the-art multispecialty care center located at 5316 Nesconset Hwy, Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776.**

“At NY Imaging Specialists, we take pride in offering the most advanced imaging technology in the area, prioritizing patients’ comfort with faster scanning times,” said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO. “This cutting-edge facility demonstrates our dedication and commitment to improving the quality of life and overall health of patients in the communities we serve, while keeping them close to home.”

The facility will provide a seamless and integrated healthcare experience, offering a wide range of imaging services, including MRI, PET, CT, Ultrasound, X-ray, Mammography, and Stereotactic Breast Biopsies. The center also offers a comprehensive range of medical services: primary, urology, nephrology, interventional pain and spine. The facility has an office-based procedure room for Interventional pain and urological procedures, providing patients with a one-stop solution for their healthcare needs.

**To make an appointment, call (833) 269-4624. For more information, visit [nyimaging.com](http://nyimaging.com).**



# Michael Elias, MD

## Joins New York Cancer & Blood Specialists

**New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS), one of the nation's leading oncology practices, is proud to announce the addition of oncologist-hematologist Michael Elias, MD. Dr. Elias will practice at 1050 Clove Road, Staten Island, NY 10301 and 1384 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10301.**

"We are excited to have Dr. Elias as part of the NYCBS family," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO of NYCBS. "His dedication to delivering patient-centered and holistic care perfectly aligns with our practice's core values."

As a Hematology/Oncology-trained physician, Dr. Elias possesses extensive expertise in treating a wide range of hematologic and oncologic diseases. He holds a particular interest in prostate, bladder, and lung cancers, ensuring that patients receive specialized and comprehensive care.

Dr. Elias earned his Doctor of Medicine degree from Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. He further enhanced his skills and knowledge through an Internal Medicine Internship & Residency at the University of Nevada, followed by a Hematology-Oncology Fellowship at Penn State Health Medical Center.

"Hematology-oncology is a field of rapid advancement, offering new therapies, treatment options, improved outcomes, and personalized care for patients," remarked Dr. Elias. "I find great fulfillment in guiding patients through challenging times and I eagerly anticipate serving the Staten Island community."

**Please call (718) 732-4049  
to make an appointment with  
Dr. Elias.**

For more information, visit  
[nycancer.com](http://nycancer.com).



# Byung Kim, MD

## Joins New York Cancer & Blood Specialists

**New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS), one of the nation's leading oncology practices, is proud to announce the addition of oncologist-hematologist Byung Kim, MD. Dr. Kim will practice at 88-06 55th Ave Elmhurst, NY 11373.**

We are proud to welcome Dr. Kim to the NYCBS family," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO of NYCBS. "With the addition of Dr. Kim to our team, we are excited to expand our reach and provide exceptional care to even more patients in the Queens community."

Dr. Kim has a particular interest in thoracic and gastrointestinal oncology. Following national guidelines for diagnosis and treatment, he prioritizes understanding each patient's unique needs and desires, ensuring a personalized and tailored approach to their medical journey.

Born in South Korea and raised in Guatemala, Dr. Kim can connect with patients from diverse ethnic backgrounds and cultures. In addition to English, Dr. Kim is fluent in Korean and Spanish.

"I am very excited to have the opportunity to practice medicine with a very successful team of medical professionals and staff, and I am looking forward to serving the community of all ethnic backgrounds and cultures," Dr. Kim said.

Previously, Dr. Kim practiced Hematology and Oncology at the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care. He was the former Chairman of the Cancer Committee and Medical Oncology physician leader for the National Accreditation Program for Lung and Rectal Cancer at Maine General Medical Center.

Dr. Kim earned his Doctor of Medicine from St. George's University. He completed his Internal Medicine Residency and Hematology-Oncology Fellowship at Roger Williams Medical Center/ Boston University, where he served as Chief Medical Resident.

**To make an appointment with  
Dr. Kim, please call 718-651-9398.**

For more information, visit [nycancer.com](http://nycancer.com).



## Upcoming New York Cancer Foundation Events

*Head over to [nycancerfoundation.org](https://nycancerfoundation.org) to learn more about our events!*

### 5th Annual Raising Hope Golf Classic: August 7th, 2023

The New York Cancer Foundation is thrilled to host its 5th Annual Raising Hope Golf Classic on August 7th, 2023! Please join us at Nissequogue Golf Club for a beautiful day on the course, including raffles, a silent auction, and live music! Can't join us for golf? Join us at 5:30 PM for our cocktail reception! All proceeds from this event go to the New York Cancer Foundation, helping cancer patients struggling financially in our very own communities.

### 1st Annual New York Health Conference: August 26th, 2023

On August 26th, we are excited to be hosting the Inaugural NY Health Conference, to be held at the beautiful Garden City Hotel. With speakers from various pharma sponsors, the Physicians, APPs, and Nursing staff will enjoy a day of education and networking.

### 10th Annual Patient Celebration Day: September 9th, 2023

Our favorite day has arrived! Join us Saturday, September 9th, at Bald Hill Amphitheater as we welcome over 1,500 NYCBS patients for a fun-filled day! This year, we will have exciting activities with new rides, live music, raffles, and catering by Felicos!

### Run the Vineyard 5k: October 1st, 2023

Join us at 9:00 AM for Run the Vineyard! New York Cancer Foundation has partnered with Good Day for a Run, LLC! The race will take place at Pindar Vineyards in Peconic, NY! Join us for the race at Pindar Vineyard October 1st! Use the code "NYCancerFoundation" for 10% off! A percentage of the proceeds from this event will benefit the New York Cancer Foundation! Possibilities Rescue, Inc. will also join us as they will have puppies available for adoption at the race!

### 3rd Annual Raising Hope Gala: October 13th, 2023

Join the New York Cancer Foundation for an exquisite evening of dinner and dancing as we honor Ted Okon, Executive Director at Community Oncology Alliance. The night will also include a live and silent auction on October 13th, 2023, at Ziegfeld Ballroom in New York City!

## Nutrition Team Updates

We hope you are enjoying the summer season and try out some of our delicious recipes featured in recent newsletters.

We have a warm welcome for our newest team member, Patricia Salvio, who can be found at our Central Park, Bronx and Forest Hills locations.

Our team has been diligently working on familiarizing ourselves with Medicaid, Medicare and other insurance coverage to assist patients in obtaining nutrition supplements. We extend a heartfelt thanks to all the amazing teams who work with us in this effort.

Play golf? Don't forget to check out our informative nutrition tips specifically tailored for golfers in this newsletter. We've got you covered!

If you are interested in the NYCBS women's cancer support group, please feel free to email us at [nutrition@nycancer.com](mailto:nutrition@nycancer.com).

As always, we aspire towards cultivating stronger relationships and promoting interdisciplinary teamwork. Please reach out to connect, collaborate or simply check-in!

Wishing you all a healthy and fulfilling start of the school year!  
Your Nutrition Team



# 5th Annual Raising Hope Golf Classic

## Key Nutrition Tips for Golfers



### Golf Day Goals:

- Consume adequate nutrients to maintain normal blood sugar levels
- Stay well hydrated

### Eat a good meal before heading out for the day:

- Components of a balanced meal:
- Lean protein
- Whole grains or high-fiber starches
- Fruits and/or vegetables
- Meal should be low in saturated fat

### Pre-game meal suggestions:

- Tomato and avocado egg sandwich on whole grain English muffin
- Chicken and greens in a whole grain wrap with a small banana
- Bran flakes with 1% milk topped with berries
- Tortilla Espanola - a Spanish omelet with eggs, potatoes, and onions
- Congee paired with a boiled egg or tofu and pickled vegetables

### Consume a healthy snack every 4-5 holes:

#### Suggestions:

- Trail mix (¼ cup nuts and dried fruit)
- Energy bar
- Fig bar
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Beef jerky

### Staying hydrated is key:

- Drink 16 oz. of water (or other fluid) when you wake up
- Drink again when you eat your pre-game meal
- Drink 6-8 oz. of water or sports drink 15 minutes before the game and every 15 minutes during the round
- If humidity is high, alternate water and a sports drink (that contains sodium)  
Drink more fluid when your game is over (and before any other celebratory drinks)
- Weigh yourself before and after the game - consume 16-24 oz. for every pound lost
- Make sure urine is a clear color

**Note:** Vitamin Water does not contain sodium

*Congrats and thank you for supporting the New York Cancer Foundation!*

# 10th Annual Patient Celebration Day

Our favorite event has arrived for its 10th year!!

Join us  
**Saturday, September 9th, for the 10th Annual Patient Celebration Day at the Bald Hill Amphitheater from 12- 4 PM!**

This fun-filled day for patients, caregivers, and their families is expected to have over 1,500 people attending this special event this year. NYCBS will support this event, placing no burden on patients and caregivers. Any support remaining from this event will be donated directly to the New York Cancer Foundation to continue to help oncology patients with their household bills. We are actively looking for volunteers! Head over to [nycancerfoundation.org](http://nycancerfoundation.org) to sign up to volunteer!

**Attendees will enjoy family-friendly activities, including new rides, live music, carnival games, raffles, catering by Felicos, and an area dedicated to Working Paws Training, a dog training and adoption center! The event will also have a pop-up store where patients can find free clothes, shoes, and wigs! We can't wait to see you there!**



10th Annual

# PATIENT CELEBRATION DAY

**SATURDAY 12-4 PM**  
**SEPTEMBER 9TH 12-4 PM**

Bald Hill Amphitheatre  
1 Ski Run Lane, Farmingville, NY 11738

Exciting New Rides • Live Music • Raffles  
& Much More • Catering By Felico's

Presented By

 **NEW YORK CANCER & BLOOD SPECIALISTS**  
Conquering Cancer Together™

All Proceeds Benefit

 **NEW YORK CANCER FOUNDATION**  
Advocates For Hope



# Career Opportunities

## RADIOLOGIST

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[rnicoletti@nycancer.com](mailto:rnicoletti@nycancer.com)

## STAFF HEMATOLOGIST/MEDICAL ONCOLOGIST NEEDED BROOKLYN, NY AT OUR BROOKLYN HOSPITAL LOCATION

Contact: Eric Jackson  
[eric.jackson@oneoncology.com](mailto:eric.jackson@oneoncology.com)

## POST DOC PSYCHOLOGIST ELMHURST, QUEENS, BAY SHORE MEDICAL ONCOLOGY, SMITHTOWN MEDICAL ONCOLOGY SMITHTOWN, BAYSHORE, QUEENS

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[jschomber@nycancer.com](mailto:jschomber@nycancer.com)

## NURSE PRACTITIONER (NP) / PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA) BAYSIDE MEDICAL ONCOLOGY, STATEN ISLAND MEDICAL ONCOLOGY, NEWBURGH MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[apprecruitment@nycancer.com](mailto:apprecruitment@nycancer.com)

## MEDICAL FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

## HEMATOLOGIST/ONCOLOGISTS

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[eric.jackson@oneoncology.com](mailto:eric.jackson@oneoncology.com)

## HISTOLOGY TECHNICIAN PORT JEFFERSON STATION MEDICAL ONCOLOGY HISTOLOGY TECHNICIAN

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

## LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES (LPN'S) CENTRAL PARK MEDICAL ONCOLOGY NEW YORK CANCER AND BLOOD SPECIALISTS (NYCBS)

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

## HEAD NURSE ELMHURST MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Contact: Gregory Colas  
[gcolas@nycancer.com](mailto:gcolas@nycancer.com)

## LAB TECHNOLOGIST PORT JEFFERSON STATION MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[gcolas@nycancer.com](mailto:gcolas@nycancer.com)

## HEAD NURSE STATEN ISLAND MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[rnicoletti@nycancer.com](mailto:rnicoletti@nycancer.com)

## SUPERVISOR OF RADIATION THERAPY - FLOAT THE BROOKLYN CANCER CENTER

Contact: James Matera  
[jmatera@nycancer.com](mailto:jmatera@nycancer.com)

## STAFFING COORDINATOR (RIDGE)

Contact: Robert Nicoletti - CHRO  
[rnicoletti@nycancer.com](mailto:rnicoletti@nycancer.com)

**Know of someone looking for a new career with upward mobility?**

CLICK RIGHT HERE

# New Hires

**Adriana Lopez** (Patient Communications Operator)

**Akilah Nassy** (Intake MA)

**Alzahraa Elsaid** Medical Assistant Float

**Anthony Porto** (Scribe)

**Ashley Baggs** (Infusion RN)

**Ayana Dean** (Patient Communications Operator)

**Ben Helwa** (Receptionist)

**Bianca Morris** (Lab Medical Assistant Float)

**Bridget Alapeck** (Nurse Practitioner)

**Corinne Ansbro** (Physician Assistant)

**Crystal Ocasio** (Lab Medical Assistant)

**Crystal Torres** (Lab Medical Assistant)

**Danielle Parker** (Infusion RN)

**Deborah Bordonaro** (Physician Assistant) - Mather

**Diana Kaya** (New Patient Coordinator)

**Drew Overton** (Medical Assistant)

**Elayna Legger** (Workman's Comp Specialist)

**Emily Lopez** (New Patient Coordinator)

**Francisco Rodriguez** (Director of Patient Communications)

**Gabriela Benvaides** (Licensed Practical Nurse)

**Gina Rommel** (Nurse Practitioner)

**Hazel Rivas Chavez** (CCM CNA)

**Indira Gales** (CCM MA)

**Jaiden Heppler** (Lab Medical Assistant)

**Jenna Friedman** (Infusion RN Per Diem)

**Jennifer Chester** (Radiology Coordinator)

**Jillian Guidice** (CCM Medical Assistant)

**Joanne Lau** (MRI Technologist)

**Justina Palmer** (Licensed Practical Nurse)

**Kaitlin Chernaski** (Intake LPN)

**Karen Perez** (Scribe)

**Katherine Pagani** (Infusion RN)

**Kimberly Eskerete** (Patient Communications Operator)

**Latoya Rose-Reid** (Lab Medical Assistant Float)

**Lauren Mattarella** (New Patient Coordinator)

**Lisa Ostroski** (Mammography Supervisor)

**Mahnoor Shahid** (OBGYN MA Float)

**Margaret Musorofiti** (Physician Assistant - Triage)

**Mariia Marushkevych** (Medical Assistant)

**Matt Forletti** (Patient Communications Operator)

**Meghan Organ** (Infusion RN)

**Nelum Rajapaksha Abeykoon** (Lab Medical Assistant)

**Nicole Knorr** (Ultrasound Technologist)

**Paola Sanchez** (Lab Medical Assistant)

**Rachel Amato** (Triage RN)

**Sherika McLaughlin** (Lab Medical Assistant)

**Stella Novakhova** (Licensed Practical Nurse)

**Stephanie DeCristofaro** (Ultrasound Technologist)

**Tatyana Keene** (Intake MA)

**Timothy Lutz** (Nuclear Material Transporter)

**Tracey Malamed** (Patient Communications Operator)

**Tracy DiPeri** (Intake LPN)

**Trisha Altuna-Byrnes** (Medical Technologist)

**Wisleydy Castillo** (Medical Front Desk Receptionist)

**Zara Naeem** (Registered Nurse)



# OUR PATIENTS & THEIR FAMILIES

Our patients and their families tell the story of conquering cancer like no other. They help us connect, inspire, and empower. If you know a patient or have a family member who would like to make an impact and share their experience with us, please have them contact [marketing@nycancer.com](mailto:marketing@nycancer.com).