

SAMARITAN CANCER FOUNDATION NEWS

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New Foundation launched to support cancer patients and their families in the region

Goal is to create a model of outstanding patient-focused care

July 20, 2010 -- A new local foundation has been formed by Silicon Valley community leaders devoted to providing cancer patients and their families in the region with outstanding personalized care and support.

The Samaritan Cancer Foundation will raise funds for services not usually provided by medical offices and not covered by insurance such as a personal cancer care manager who will guide cancer patients and their families through their cancer journey, coordinate care from multiple physicians, and connect the patients to other community resources.

The founding eight-member Board of Directors includes long-time cancer care advocate Gay Crawford, Bill Piche, recently-retired CEO of Good Samaritan Hospital, oncologist James Cohen, M.D., and community members Noelle Cilker Henderson, Eric Eberle, Kim Roberts, Stephanie Schiro Ronco and Jan Willoughby.

"The directors represent a variety of skills and experience, but what we all have in common is a vision for patient-focused cancer care that is supportive and tailored to meet the needs of the individual," said Piche.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in California and an estimated 6,000 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in Santa Clara County in 2010, according to the American Cancer Society.

"There is no one in our region who has not been touched by cancer – either themselves, family, friends, neighbors or co-workers," said Piche, who himself has lost a brother and sister to cancer. "The very word cancer is frightening and emotional. It is an illness that takes a lot out of the patient and the family. They need all the support they can get."

The Foundation will be headquartered at the Samaritan Cancer Care Center, now under construction, that will provide multidisciplinary, integrated services for the diagnosis, treatment, and support of cancer patients in one convenient location. The Foundation is working with architects to help create a medical environment that is warm, soothing, and healing. Many of the Foundation's ideas have come from focus groups of current and past cancer patients and their caregivers in the region.

Topping the list of priorities to be supported by the Foundation are personal cancer care managers who will help each patient understand the process involved with the diagnosis and treatment plans of all type of cancers.

"The role of the cancer care manager will vary depending on the needs of the individual patient and family," explained Crawford. "In some cases, it will be help in

navigating the insurance system or arranging for transportation to treatment appointments. Other patients might need referrals to counseling or in-home care or financial advisors. Whatever the situation, we want all cancer patients to know they have an advocate anticipating their needs and supporting them through the journey of cancer diagnosis and treatment.”

Research conducted by several institutions, including Stanford University, show that people with cancer who have a strong support system and are able to reduce stress and enjoy emotional well-being have a better cancer prognosis.

“Cancer treatment takes a heavy toll on patients and their family members, both physically and emotionally,” said Crawford who is a two-time cancer survivor. “You need help in ways you would never imagine. The Foundation wants to make sure that all patients have the support they need.”

More information is available on the website www.samaritancancerfoundation.org.