THE CANCER INSTITUTES AT NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE
CANCER SURVIVORSHIP INSTITUTE
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Today more than ever, cancer survivors are leading healthy and fulfilling lives due to the many advances in early detection, diagnosis, and treatment. Long-term effects of cancer and cancer-related therapies, however, require ongoing surveillance. Cancer survivors, therefore, face a number of distinct psychosocial and medical challenges that last well beyond the diagnostic and primary treatment phases.

The National Coalition of Cancer Survivorship defines an individual as a cancer survivor from the time of diagnosis, through the rest of his or her life. Family, friends, and caregivers of those affected by cancer are also part of the survivorship experience. Although there is abundant literature on how best to deal with post-cancer-treatment medical and psycho-social issues, navigating through the flood of information can be extremely daunting. The Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University and its Cancer Survivorship Institute are providing leadership and excellence in research, clinical care, and trusted resources for survivors and their families.

The Cancer Survivorship Institute at Northwestern Medicine is exceptionally well-positioned to integrate the best medical care with evidence-based programs that attend to the unique medical, physical, and psychosocial changes and needs that come with cancer survivorship. The Institute’s approach centers on patients and provides comprehensive supportive oncology services including psychosocial, rehabilitative, integrative, and palliative care. Our specialized survivorship medical clinics address the unique needs of specific groups of cancer survivors and their families. The Cancer Survivorship Institute will position Northwestern Medicine and the Lurie Cancer Center as a world leader in cancer survivorship clinical care and research.

Supportive Oncology and Specialty Survivorship Patient Services

Specialty support programs and clinics provide emotional and practical support for patients and their families during all stages of their care—from diagnosis through treatment, recovery, and long-term follow-up. These programs offer practical and supportive information to help survivors and caregivers cope with the shift in focus from treatment to recovery when caring for a loved one with cancer. The continuum of support services includes psychosocial support and education during and after completing primary treatment for their cancer, care plans that detail future follow-up, monitoring for late side effects of treatment, modifying lifestyle factors that can impact health outcomes, and tools to address physical and emotional concerns. The Institute’s clinicians and social workers are trained to provide psychosocial and emotional support, nutrition counseling, fertility preservation, social work services, and healthcare system navigation. The following are examples of tailored and specialized clinics and programs that focus on the unique needs of different demographic groups.

The Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Survivorship Program offers comprehensive care and management strategies for the unique challenges that women who are treated for breast cancer face as they transition to post-treatment survivorship care. These issues include hot flashes, osteoporosis, fatigue, weight gain, depression, anxiety, cognitive impairment, sexual dysfunction, neuropathy, fertility problems, and lymphedema.

The Survivors Taking Action & Responsibility (STAR) Program is a comprehensive, long-term follow-up program for adult survivors of pediatric cancer. The STAR Program follows survivors through adulthood focusing on their special medical and psychological needs. Effective integration between the Lurie Cancer Center and the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago STAR programs improves the care throughout a survivor’s lifetime.

The Senior Oncology Outcomes, Advocacy, and Research Program (SOAR) is a cancer survivorship program specifically tailored to meet the needs of older individuals. The focus of SOAR is to help improve their health-related quality of life and

“Cancer survivors face many challenges that can compromise quality of life and health outcomes well beyond completing primary treatment. The unique medical and psychosocial needs of cancer survivors should be managed in the context of a long-term comprehensive, holistic, and evidence-based approach guided by clinical investigations spanning from basic mechanisms to translational and community research models. The Cancer Survivorship Institute integrates these clinical and research efforts seamlessly to improve the lives of cancer survivors, their families, and the community.”

Frank J. Penedo, PhD
Institute Director, Cancer Control and Survivorship Research Program Leader
Collaboration with our clinics. Other innovative programs are using new technologies to deliver stress management interventions to manage treatment symptoms at the patient’s home.

Community-Engaged Survivorship research is aimed at eliminating health disparities among low income, medically underserved survivors across the lifespan. It integrates health services research with social epidemiologic models and studies interventions (such as patient navigation and community health outreach workers) that aim to reduce and eliminate such disparities. Within this context, culture and community are leveraged. Consistent with the mission of the Institute and our Survivorship Research Program, organizations such as the Coleman Foundation and the Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation have made these efforts a priority. Many of our faculty are actively engaged in collaborations with community organizations and hospitals in the Chicagoland region.

The Lurie Cancer Center and its Cancer Survivorship Institute are committed to integrating research-based therapies and a continuum of care for its patients and their families to help turn the life-changing trials of dealing with cancer into something positive. We offer hope and inspiration that there is truly life after cancer.

Northwestern Medicine

Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine are seeking to impact the health of humankind through Northwestern Medicine. We aspire to be the destinations of choice for people seeking quality healthcare; for those who provide, support, and advance that care through leading-edge treatments and breakthrough discoveries; and for people who share our passion for educating future physicians and scientists. Our commitment to transform healthcare and to be among the nation’s top academic medical centers will be accomplished through innovation and excellence.

The Cancer Institutes within our world-class Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University are providing exciting opportunities to bring our best people, programs, and resources together to plan, coordinate, and implement patient care, research, education, community service, and advocacy across the realm of cancer. In addition to creating a breakthrough Department of Cancer Biology, we will establish several new institutes and centers within the next few years to facilitate the work of our cancer physicians and scientists. These robust interfaces and collaborations will undoubtedly lead to clinical advances that benefit patients and their families locally, nationally, and across the globe.

Cancer Survivorship Research

As part of our National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center, the Cancer Control and Survivorship Research Program is committed to research that identifies the most successful paths to ensure best outcomes for patients. As such, faculty members from across Northwestern University are brought together to focus on secondary cancer control, survivorship quality of life, state-of-the-art assessment of patient-reported outcomes, and the palliation of cancer-related physical and psychosocial symptom burden. The Cancer Control and Survivorship Program targets three thematic areas: Measure, Analyze and Interpret Quality of Life; Understand and Improve Cancer Survivorship; and Symptom Management and Supportive Care.

Our areas of research investigation include studies of the interactions among environmental, behavioral, psychosocial, neuroendocrine, immunological, neurobiological, and genetic factors in cancer survivorship. We also are examining the associated psychosocial and physical effects on the cancer patient, the family, and the community. Combining clinical care and bio-behavioral oncology research provides ideal translational research platforms to enhance the survivorship experience. Many of our studies use community-engaged approaches to deliver psychosocial interventions to improve quality of life in survivors. Our work also aims at understanding biological mechanisms underlying associations between behavior and health outcomes. The Supportive Oncology Program and Specialty Clinics work directly with clinical researchers who are members of the Cancer Control and Survivorship Program and facilitate studies such as clinical trials aimed at improving health outcomes in cancer survivors.

The Translational Research Program within the Institute aims to implement patient-centered outcomes research in close collaboration with our clinics. Other innovative programs are using...
Learn more about the Lurie Cancer Center’s patient care, services and programs, research and education, clinical trials, and faculty at cancer.northwestern.edu.