Eisehower Lucy Curci Cancer Center

Sets the Standard for Comprehensive, Compassionate Cancer Care

By: Roxanne Jones

Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center

A healing place like no other.

These words accurately reflect what Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center offers to people with cancer and their families. The nationally accredited Cancer Center combines today's most advanced diagnostic tools, cutting-edge treatments, access to clinical trials, an exceptional team of cancer specialists and extensive support services — all housed in a beautifully appointed facility designed to enhance healing.

"There's no reason to leave the desert for cancer treatment," says the Cancer Center's Chief Administrative Officer Lilli Mandelik. "The treatment you receive here is on par with any big metropolitan cancer center, but we're right here in your own backyard."

In fact, the Cancer Center marked its 10th anniversary in 2013, a milestone that saw the addition of medical oncology to its services. With this expansion, six respected specialists joined the staff (Murthy Andavolu, MD; Kellie Flippin, MD; Varun Gupta, MD; Iliana Popescu, MD; Henry Tsai, MD; and Davood Vafai, MD). In addition, the Cancer Center opened two new infusion suites (Rancho Mirage and La Quinta) to accommodate patients undergoing chemotherapy and other infusion therapies, rounding out an already robust roster of cancer care services.

"Before this, these physicians were private practitioners who sent patients here for services," Mandelik explains. "Now they work in the Cancer Center, and patients see them here. This integration brings us closer to our ultimate goal of having everything someone with cancer would need in one center as well as our satellite facilities."

By satellite facilities, Mandelik is referring to the availability of radiation therapy, breast care and infusion therapy at the Eisenhower George and Julia Argyros Health Center in La Quinta. [MORE]

"We're thrilled to be able to offer a full scope of cancer services in the east valley," she notes.

When you ask Mandelik what sets the Lucy Curci Cancer Center's treatment and support services apart from those available elsewhere in the desert, she doesn't hesitate to reply.

"Everything we provide is cutting-edge," she says. "We have the latest technology in breast imaging for the early detection of breast cancer at our Eisenhower Schnitzer/Novack Breast Center. Our other diagnostic imaging capabilities are state-of-the-art. The same goes for our radiation therapy technology available at our Eisenhower BIGHORN Radiation Oncology Center. We offer specialized treatment expertise at our Arnold Palmer Prostate Center. And our infusion centers combine clinical excellence with truly compassionate care.

"Our physicians have subspecialty expertise in different types of cancer," she continues. "They adhere to the most up-to-date practice guidelines in cancer care, and stay on top of the latest research protocols and clinical trials so we can offer these novel treatments to appropriate patients."

Importantly, Mandelik notes, the Cancer Center takes a multidisciplinary team approach to patient care.

"Our cancer specialists work together and attend every-other-week tumor board meetings to review cases and share their expertise to develop the best treatment plan for each patient," she explains. The Cancer Center has tumor boards in breast, lung, urology, brain, gastrointestinal (GI) and prostate cancers, as well as a main tumor board that covers other types of malignancies.

"Everyone involved in a patient's care gets together in one room and reviews every case," Mandelik says. "This includes radiologists, pathologists, surgeons, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, researchers and social workers, as well as any other physicians involved — a woman's gynecologist or primary care physician, for example. We want to cover the gamut, making sure that the people who come to us will receive the best level of care possible."

Participating in clinical trials is also an integral part of the Cancer Center's commitment to provide the best cancer treatment options and give patients access to new drugs and interventions before they're widely available. Through an affiliation with Stanford Cancer Center, Eisenhower offers National Cancer Institute-sponsored clinical trials aimed at finding new and better treatments for those diagnosed with this disease.

The Cancer Center's clinical expertise is rivaled by its careful attention to each patient's emotional and psychosocial needs. "Our goal is to provide a centralized place for people living with cancer and their loved ones to come for all their needs," Mandelik says.

To that end, the Cancer Center offers an array of support services and thoughtful amenities designed to help patients feel as comfortable — and comforted — as possible. "We want to take away as much of the fear that surrounds a cancer diagnosis as possible," Mandelik says "We do this by providing a huge amount of support and education to patients and their families."

These support and education resources include monthly lectures by cancer experts and a wide range of disease-specific support groups — all offered at no charge.

The Cancer Center also offers genetic counseling, nutrition counseling and short-term individual and family counseling with trained oncology social workers.

"We want patients and their loved ones to feel they have a safe place to talk about their fears and needs as they deal with this disease," Mandelik says. "Our aim is to help them feel empowered and as secure as they can feel about each step of their care."

This attention to the human side of dealing with cancer is a huge part of what makes Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center *a healing place like no other*.

"We have an incredible team of people here," Mandelik says of the staff at the Center. "I've never met a kinder, more respectful and caring group of people — from the concierge who greets people in the lobby to the nurse who will hold a patient's hand during infusion therapy to the physician who takes the time to fully explain a patient's treatment options.

"Working with people who have cancer is not just a job, but a calling," she adds. "And our reward is knowing that, at the end of the day, you've made someone's life a little better."

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