

20 YEARS!

So much has happened since 1986

"Patient satisfaction and patient well-being is always at the top of our agenda."

We have cared for more than 30,000 patients. We have grown into one of the country's largest oncology and hematology private practices. Talented oncologists, hematologists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, oncology nurses, and allied oncology professionals have joined us. We have over 130 staff members in five offices. Our experienced team treats more than 5,000 new patients annually.

Treating Cancer: A Personal View

Since 1986, we have worked relentlessly to advance cancer care. The size of the practice and the treatments have changed, and so has our outlook on the disease.

"Today, treating and caring for cancer patients is more exciting than it has ever been," says Dr. Simon Tchekmedyan, Founder and Medical Director of Pacific Shores Medical Group. "We are living in a time when there is an explosion of new information, new treatments coming. Our team is more active, more energetic than ever. We are moving forward fast."

"The technologies that we use have been enhanced by the digital age – we can accomplish in a very short time research that used to take a year. We are able to use clinical trials to give our patients more options and the cutting edge of patient care."

This is why we tell patients with difficult illnesses to hang on, to strive to keep their cancer under control. Help is coming; new treatments are emerging. New therapies are becoming available rapidly.

"Twenty years ago, when a patient came to us, we had very few treatments we could try," says Dr. Kalust Ucar, Regional Medical Director. "Today, not only do we have many more treatments available, but new ones are arriving at such a rapid pace. In the time it takes a patient's cancer to develop resistance to a treatment, new options may have arrived. There's very often something else to try. We don't have to say there's nothing more we can do for you."

This success makes those cases where the disease stubbornly resists treatment even harder to take – and drives us to dig further to help the patient.

"It is a phenomenal emotional challenge to deal with the ravages of cancer in patients we have known for a long time, patients we have helped, patients we now call our friends," Dr. Tchekmedyan says. "Especially the patients who are very ill, the ones with life-threatening conditions – they are the ones closest to our hearts."

"What defines this practice is that we will not let our patients down. We will take every step necessary, leave no stone unturned, so that our patients have hope."

Future Treatments

We envision more and more new treatments, more delivered orally, and with fewer side effects. Rather than blasting the cancer cells out or blowing them up, we are learning to send a more gentle but very lethal combination of signals to the cancer cells. We are convincing the cancer cells to die quietly – and the patients are all the better for it.

Dr. Tchekmedyan thinks back to the advances in treatments he has seen over two decades, and adds, "Some of these treatments today, truly, seem miraculous."

Patients often quietly express concern about the pain associated with a cancer diagnosis. Dr. Ucar says pain management is another area of cancer therapies that has changed dramatically in the past two decades.

"In a patient consultation, it's usually the last question they ask, kind of quietly, about how we can help them deal with the pain," Ucar says. "And I usually close the door, sit back down, look them straight in the eye and tell them, 'Don't worry. Pain is not always associated with cancer. But if it is in your case, we will take care of you. You will not have to put up with it.'"

Future of the Pacific Shores Medical Group

We are entering a new phase of our existence, with Dr. Tchekmedyan spending more time on training and education of our staff and in clinical research.

"I think I can help many more patients this way," he says. "I want to continue to work on quality improvement throughout our practice and to be a resource for our doctors and nurses." The practice, Dr. Tchekmedyan says, will only grow stronger.

"We are a very cohesive unit, entirely focused on the well-being of our patients. We will continue to be recognized for our broad and deep core curriculum for ancillary staff, the most stringent procedures for patient safety, strong and effective leadership and an enormous amount of experience among our physicians and staff."