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"Patient care, education, and research must be integrated at all times if we are to lead and excel as we move forward."

Programs of Excellence

We have the most complete and stringent standard operating procedures for the care of our patients, and our quality improvement team never stops working. We are constantly working to expand and improve our diagnostic and treatment programs.

Core Curriculum for Healthcare Professionals

In fact, our unique core curriculum is a national model for staff education. The curriculum consists of twelve units covering a very broad and deep oncology and hematology education program, taught by our staff under our physicians' supervision. Our curriculum is quickly becoming a central educational source for oncology nurses and allied professionals from regional hospitals and other community cancer caring centers.

"Increasing the level of knowledge will enhance the assessment and quality of care that nurses can provide to oncology patients. This is of paramount importance," says Chona Ray, RN, MSN, ONP.

Patient Education

Educating our patients, caregivers, and families about their illness and all aspects of its treatment always has been a priority for us. A unique feature of our program is that patients meet with the treatment team before any treatment is started. When patients meet the team members, they review the treatment in specific detail, all potential side effects, how to prevent undesirable complications, and when to contact the nurse or physician. A patient information booklet, published by our practice, is a useful tool we give to every patient. The booklet also contains a calendar so that patients can track their treatment schedule.

Symptom Management

Increasing the ability of our patients' to pursue active lifestyles that incorporate good nutrition and exercise continues to be a priority. A recent nutrition book chapter addressing nutrition in cancer patients was written by Dr. David Heber, head of clinical nutrition at UCLA, and Dr. Simon Tchekmedyan, medical director at PSMG. Reprints are available for patients and caregivers at our offices.

"The patients need sufficient protein and calories in their diets, especially while undergoing therapies. Many treatments involve surgeries, radiation, and chemotherapies, and we have to maintain sufficient patient nutrition through all of these if we are to cure our patients and restore them to normality as rapidly as possible," Dr. Tchekmedyan says.

We continue to pursue advances in the area of pain control. Medical Director Dr. Kalust Ucar continues to develop programs of pain control and education for other health professionals as well as lectures on this topic.

"Anemia is a major focus because it is associated with fatigue. It is difficult to ask patients to be more active if they are anemic. We now have excellent therapies for anemia; we have been very active in research in anemia treatments, and that has been very fruitful and very rewarding," Dr. Ucar says.

Our infusion capabilities are also helpful to patients facing a variety of conditions, as well as to health care specialists. Many new treatments require prolonged intravenous infusions and our centers are equipped to offer this service with the utmost safety and comfort. Patients with osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, neuropathy, and other conditions frequently benefit from the treatments we administer under the direction of their specialists.

Overcoming Language Barriers

Because we serve dynamic and diverse communities throughout the Southland, we have learned to communicate with patients whose primary language is not English. This is of particular importance to first generation immigrants who face cancer. We have found that our non-English-speaking patients feel comforted and happier if they can communicate in their primary language. To serve the needs of these patients, we have made our written materials available in several languages, and staff members are fluent in languages including Spanish, Chinese, Armenian, Farsi, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and others.