In the last few years tremendous strides have been made in understanding the factors associated with breast cancer risk, as well as in new screening and prevention options for women who are at high risk. One of the most significant risk factors associated with breast cancer is family history, especially as it relates to genetics. Approximately 1 in 5 of women with breast cancer has a family history, and 10-15% of breast cancers are associated with a specific known genetic predisposition. Genetic testing for hereditary predisposition to breast cancer is recommended for individuals with a personal or family history suggestive of a genetic etiology. Understanding which genes are involved in breast cancer development is of utmost importance as it can guide optimal management strategies, including high risk screening, surgical prevention and chemoprevention. Furthermore, this knowledge helps other family members better understand their own risk, allowing them to take the necessary steps to prevent a cancer from occurring.

The main genes associated with hereditary breast cancer are the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. These two genes predispose women to a high risk for breast and ovarian cancer, along with other types of cancers including male breast, prostate, melanoma, and pancreas. Less commonly, breast cancer can be also due to other hereditary cancer syndromes such as Li-Fraumeni, caused by mutations in TP53, and Cowden syndrome, caused by mutations in the PTEN gene. Since the original identification of the BRCA1/2 genes in the mid-1990s, tremendous progress has been made in understanding the clinical characteristics and molecular mechanism of hereditary breast and ovarian cancer; this in turn has helped identify optimal screening, prevention, and treatment options. Patients who carry a mutation in either the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene have 60-80% lifetime risk of breast cancer and a 15-45% lifetime risk of ovarian cancer. In addition, these genes are associated with an increased risk of male breast cancer, prostate cancer, pancreatic cancer and melanoma, although the latter are much less common.

Children of a parent with a BRCA mutation and other close relatives have a 50% likelihood of having the same mutation. It is important that adult relatives be informed of this risk and offered genetic counseling, testing, followed by proper risk-based management. Several expert panels have put forth recommendations for cancer surveillance and other interventions for individuals carrying these gene mutations. Women are advised to undergo high risk surveillance with monthly breast exams starting at age 18, clinical breast exams two to four times annually starting at age 25, as well as annual mammogram and breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) starting at age 25 (or individualized based on the earliest age of diagnosis in the family).

Screening for ovarian cancer may be considered with a transvaginal ultrasound and a serum CA-125; however, ovarian cancer screening is not reliable and it is recommended that patients have preventative surgery (bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy) between the ages of 35 or 40 or upon the completion of childbearing. For women who wish to maximally reduce their risk of breast cancer, bilateral mastectomy with reconstruction is often considered. This surgery leads to a 90% reduction in the risk of breast cancer in these high risk patients.

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Chemoprevention is an option for individuals who choose not to have preventative surgery. This includes Tamoxifen, which has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of breast cancer in high risk women, and oral contraceptives, which have been shown to significantly reduce the risk of ovarian cancer. The benefits and side effects of these and other preventative agents should be discussed by the patient and her personal physician. The decision of which course of action to take should be individualized and discussed in detail with a team of physicians with knowledge and expertise in oncology and cancer genetics. Genetic counseling is an important component of this discussion and is strongly recommended. Genetic counseling is available at Beaumont through the Nancy and James Grosfeld Cancer Genetics Program located in the first floor of the Cancer Center. You can find us online at http://cancer.beaumont.edu/genetics.

New developments in the field of cancer genetics have been rapidly emerging, and have changed the landscape of this field in the last few years. The emerging availability of gene panel testing has allowed for rapid, efficient testing of multiple genes associated with hereditary cancer risk. With the discovery of other genes associated with breast cancer these gene panel tests are now becoming more widely utilized. Other cancer-associated genes included in some multi gene panels include TP53, PTEN, RAD51, CHEK2 to name a few. As more genes have been identified to cause breast cancer, the field of cancer genetics has rapidly evolved, providing new opportunities and challenges for genetic evaluation, screening, treatment and prevention of cancer. Understanding one’s genetic test result also opens up the exciting opportunity for novel targeted treatments for breast, ovarian and other cancers associated with these genes.

Most importantly, a new class of agents called PARP inhibitors has been available at Beaumont in clinical trials for patients carrying BRCA1 and BRCA2 related cancers. These targeted agents, also called “smart drugs”, are providing promise for more effective treatment which focuses on the molecular defect in the cancer, while sparing healthy tissues from excessive toxicity. Beaumont is participating in several such studies, including a recently opened, adjuvant phase 3 breast cancer study called the Olympia trial for women with BRCA related breast cancer. Access to such clinical trials provides patients with new options that harness the knowledge obtained in the research laboratory toward exciting and cutting edge treatments for breast, ovarian and other cancers. It is anticipated that these targeted agents will provide options for targeted cancer prevention in this high risk population. These and other exciting developments in cancer genetics support the statement that “knowledge is power” when it comes to genetics, cancer treatment and prevention.

2nd Annual Night Out at Leon & Lulu’s

Don’t forget to join us on Tuesday, December 9th for a fun evening out! Finish up your holiday shopping, and help Sharing & Caring as well.

A portion of all proceeds from sales between 6:00 and 8:00 pm will be generously donated to Sharing & Caring to help fund programs and events.

Bring your friends and enjoy light refreshments as you shop for unique gifts for everyone on your list.

Located in the historic Ambassador Roller Rink in Clawson
96 W. 14 Mile Road
Utilizing Acupuncture to Provide Health and Healing Along the Cancer Journey

Acupuncture is an integral part of Chinese Medicine which has been practiced for over 3000 years. In recent years, this ancient modality has gained popularity in the United States as well, as the beneficial effects of combining acupuncture with Western Medicine to promote the healing process of the body has become more widely recognized.

Scientifically, acupuncture works by inserting small needles into specific points on the body called acupoints which lie along the meridians, or energy pathways. This stimulation causes central nervous system responses which encourage the natural healing process.

It is important to understand that acupuncture does not treat cancer itself. The acupuncture program is to help manage discomfort resulting from oncology treatments and to promote well-being and improvement in daily activities. Specifically, acupuncture can be a benefit to the oncology patient who is undergoing chemotherapy and radiation by alleviating the side effects and symptoms of treatment. Just some of the symptoms that acupuncture can help manage include fatigue, anxiety, insomnia, depression, neuropathy, bone pain, headaches and mouth sores.

Acupuncture is useful in patients post-treatment as well. It can be used to unblock surgical scars in patients who have continued pain related to their surgical procedures and incisions. Limited range of motion of joints because of scar restriction, and skin and muscle damage secondary to surgery and radiation therapy can also be improved with acupuncture.

Well into survivorship, patients with a history of oncology can continue to reap the benefits of acupuncture by experiencing relief from symptoms such as hot flashes, pain, neuropathy, skin rashes and sinus congestion.

In addition to acupuncture, Beaumont’s Integrative Medicine team offers services specifically designed for cancer patients, including Naturopathic Medicine, Oncology Massage and Guided Imagery. For more information on these services, or to schedule an appointment, please call 248-964-9200.

Save the Date!
16th Annual Breast Cancer Symposium

We’re working hard to put together another great day of inspirational and educational topics. We haven’t securely pinned down all of our speakers just yet, but as soon as we do, we’ll be certain to share the day’s programming with you. We promise, as always, it will be a symposium worth attending!

Saturday, May 9th, 2015
The Village Club
190 East Long Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI

We’d love for you to like us! On Facebook, that is!

Don’t miss out on the latest news, reminders and updates. You’ll find us at Sharing & Caring at Beaumont.
ALL Sharing & Caring events are RESERVATIONS REQUIRED! Please call 248-551-8585 and let us know you plan to attend. If no one is available to take your call, a message with your name, phone number and which program you want to attend will complete your registration.

**Breast Cancer Support - There's something just right for you!**

**Breast Cancer Support Group:** Mondays, January 19th, February 16th and March 16th  10:30am  
*Troy Beaumont*

The sudden and unexpected changes that go along with a breast cancer diagnosis can be difficult to manage. This small group discussion led by Oncology Social Worker Laurel Martinez, LMSW, LCSW, OSW-C, provides an opportunity for women to discuss the unique challenges facing them as breast cancer survivors. Meets in the Wilson Cancer Resource Center 1st floor conference room, in the Professional Building at 44344 Dequindre Road, across the bridge from Beaumont Hospital, Troy.

**STAGE 4 - A Group for Women with Metastatic Breast Cancer:**

Tuesdays, January 20th, February 17th and March 17th  7:00pm  
*Royal Oak Beaumont*

This group provides an opportunity for survivors who have metastatic breast cancer to discuss the unique challenges and issues they face. Women with stage four breast cancer often feel unable to talk about their cancer. This format provides a safe arena to converse about what is on your mind and in your heart. You are welcome to attend one or all meetings. This meeting will be facilitated by Psychologist Dr. Sally Smolen of Mercy Works in Farmington Hills and Jennifer Martens, Oncology Nurse Clinician. We will be meeting in the Resource Center on the first floor of the Rose Cancer Center, Royal Oak.

**Additional Programs**

**Lymphedema: Symptoms, Management & Avoidance:** Thursday, January 15th 7pm  *Royal Oak Beaumont*

Do you know that lymphedema can occur immediately after breast cancer surgery, or months or even years later? Anytime lymph nodes under the arm have been removed, there is a higher risk of lymphedema. Join us as Dr. Justin Riutta, Director of Beaumont’s Lymphedema Clinic talks about risk factors, prevention, treatment, and management and Cynthia Tan, P.T., demonstrates proper wrapping. Bring your questions. Meets in the Royal Oak Cancer Center 1st floor classroom.

**Angel Pillow Project Sewing Morning:** Monday, January 26th 9:00 to 11:00 am  *Royal Oak Beaumont*

Angel Pillow Project was created in an effort to bring support and comfort to newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. The pillows are used to soothe both physical and emotional pain immediately after surgery. Breast cancer is hard to face alone; these pillows let women know they are indeed not alone! Each pillow includes a pretty handwritten note of encouragement from a survivor. They are used as seatbelt support, underarm support, arm rest, and for sleeping at night. We will provide sewing machines, material, scissors, ribbon and card supplies, but donations of these items are always appreciated! If you would like to participate and do not sew, please come anyway! We need help making cards, stuffing pillows, and cutting material! Please rsvp so we know how many machines to bring to the classroom – also if you have a machine that you can bring, let us know that too! Meets in the Royal Oak Cancer Center 1st floor classroom.

**Yoga Night:** Thursday, February 5th 7:00 pm  *Troy Beaumont*

Join us for a gentle introductory yoga class. REACH Yoga is specifically designed for those affected by breast cancer as a way to reconnect with our body in a supportive environment. Restore, Exhale and Align with a Community of Healing. It is safe and appropriate for those who are in treatment or have completed treatment. No prior yoga experience is necessary. Katherine Schaefer E-RYT500, LMT, Reiki Master will be leading the group through breathing and awareness exercises, yoga and creative movement. Together we will explore our relationship to earth and sky in order to find ease in movement and a sense of calm throughout our body and mind. Please bring a mat or beach towel with you and wear comfortable clothing that you can move around in. Chairs will be available. Class meets in the lower level of Troy Beaumont Hospital, Classrooms 1 thru 4.
**Genetics with Jen:**  *Thursday, February 26th 7:00 pm Royal Oak Beaumont*

Have you ever wondered if you or a family member should consider genetic counseling? What exactly do genetics counselors do, anyway? Have there been any new discoveries in breast cancer genetics? If I’ve already been tested, is there any reason to see a counselor again? What about my insurance coverage? Join us, along with Jennifer Fulbright, MS, CGC, who will answer these questions and many more. We will meet in the Royal Oak Cancer Center 1st floor classroom.

**Managing the Fear of Recurrence:**  *Thursday, March 5th 7:00 pm Royal Oak Beaumont*

Are there times when you almost forget about your breast cancer, only to suddenly have the worry pop back into your mind? Does the fear of it coming back never seem to dissipate? Have you ever felt it’s time to move past your breast cancer, but you just can’t seem to? Please join psychologist, Dr. Patricia Plopa who will discuss techniques and strategies to get you past the fear and anxiety that a breast cancer diagnosis can cause. We will meet in the Royal Oak Cancer Center 1st floor classroom.

**Fight Cancer with your Fork:**  *Thursday, March 12th 6:30 pm Royal Oak Beaumont*

Food is a powerful and healing substance for our bodies and a fork is a powerful tool for Survivorship! Join Oncology Dietitian Deb Martz for an information-packed evening about cancer-fighting foods! Deb will share the latest data on which foods we need to include in our diets. She will also provide us with some wonderful recipes for preparing these foods. Park in the south parking structure and meet in the auditorium of the Administration Building, just west of Beaumont Royal Oak South Tower entrance.

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**Programs at a glance...**

**January 2015**

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Don’t forget to call 248-551-8585 and reserve your seat. If no one is available to take your call, a message with your name, phone number and the name of the program you plan to attend will suffice as your reservation.
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I don’t have a ‘cancer story’, I have a story about my life that involves cancer. It started when I was very young, just 5 years old when my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Of course, back then I had no idea what was going on. Suddenly my mom was bald and spending more time away from home than in it. Four years later she passed away, 3 days before Christmas and just 4 months into my 9th year. It wasn’t much longer until my aunt was also diagnosed, again before age 40. Flags started going up and the BRCA gene mutation blood test was performed. Once it was found in my aunt, it was assumed my mom had it as well, which meant that I had a 50% chance of having it. A few weeks before my 18th birthday I insisted on testing. I was ready and needed to know ASAP whether the thing that killed my mom was in me too.

It was. So…what now? My plans changed. I knew I wouldn’t follow the recommended timeline the doctors had given me, a mastectomy at 30, oophorectomy at 35, chemoprevention, etc. I needed these time bombs gone. I spent the next 2 years researching everything I could about prophylactic mastectomies, risk reduction surgeries, pros/cons of the procedure. I made sure I was equipped with all the knowledge possible before presenting my case to a breast surgeon. That happened in July of 2013, when Dr. Dekhne walked into her exam room to see a (still teenage) woman sitting on her table. Needless to say, she was incredibly hesitant but did a good job of listening to my concerns. She decided that I wasn’t making a rash decision and I was ready to proceed with the mastectomy.

Surgery was scheduled for May of 2014, the middle of my 20th year. I did all the preparing I could and was wheeled into the operating room with no fears or jitters, just the joy of knowing I was making the right decision for my future. That day I became the youngest woman in Beaumont history to have a mastectomy. My openness about my life and my story brought on a lot of media coverage, which I welcomed with open arms. I’m so fortunate that people want to hear what I have to say, they listen to my speeches about the importance of knowing your family history and your personal risk. My life now revolves around cancer awareness events and speeches. I never in my wildest dreams thought this would be how I spend my days. The more survivors, fighters, and loved ones I meet the more I am inspired to continue sharing my story. Life is fantastic and I have no regrets about my preventative surgeries. I had a cancer-fighting friend once tell me that any sort of preventative procedure was “worth it every day and twice on Sundays”.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to live a full life without fear. I’m grateful that I have the inner strength to face the challenges presented to me with humor and a positive attitude. I’m grateful that so many people have shared their personal journeys with me. I feel like the luckiest gal in the world.

Thanks so very much!

Sharing & Caring Profile

Kelly Rothe

Sharing & Caring is incredibly fortunate to have the support and assistance of so many wonderful people. To those of you who organized fundraisers, who donated time and talent, and for all those who supported our fundraisers, or made your own donation to Sharing & Caring, we thank you. We could not continue to offer the scope of programming that we do without your help. We’re looking forward to bringing you another full year of confronting breast cancer with knowledge, support and hope...
Please note that these are not Sharing & Caring programs and each of these events has separate contact information and phone numbers.

**Nutrition for Cancer Survivorship: Learn How Diet Influences Cancer!**
Recipes and sample foods provided. Presented by Betty Boscarino, RD and Chef Steve Chapman at the Rehabilitation & Dialysis Center, 44300 Dequindre, Sterling Heights, 48314, 2nd Floor, Staff Lounge. 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Call 248-964-3430 to reserve your seat.
Nutrition for Cancer Survivorship: Thursdays, January 8th and March 12th.
Nutrition During Cancer Treatment: Thursday, February 12th.

**Look Good Feel Better:** This program is presented in conjunction with the American Cancer Society to help women who are currently undergoing cancer treatment to improve their appearance and self image by teaching them hands-on beauty techniques to overcome the appearance-related side effects of cancer treatments. We will also learn how to tie head scarves, get tips on choosing the right wig, and even bring home a beautiful kit filled with new makeup. Reservations for LGFB for Troy (10 am meeting time), or Royal Oak (6 pm meeting time) or Grosse Pointe (6:00 pm meeting time) must be made by calling the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345. Meeting dates for Royal Oak are Mondays, January 12th and February 9th. Troy meetings are Mondays: January 12th, February 9th and March 9th. Grosse Pointe meets on March 9th.

**Silver Linings, Winter 2015:** Silver Linings teaches meditation, gentle yoga, mindful eating, and mindful communication skills to women who have completed cancer treatment. Information classes, 6:30 pm Feb 12, 26 or March 5. Eight Thursday evening classes, 6:30 pm March 12-April 30. All-day class Sunday April 19. For more information about the program, please call Pam Jablonski at 248-551-4645, or email pjablonski@beaumont.edu.

**News from Clinical Trials:**
We are happy to share that the NCI (National Cancer Institutes) has designated Beaumont as a Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP). With the designation from the NCI, the Beaumont NCORP also received funding for a Community Health Education program to educate the community about the importance of clinical research. We are happy to provide guidance on how to navigate the NCI website and the open clinical trials.

If you would like to receive additional information about our programs and events please feel free to contact DiAne' Townsel, Community Health Educator – Diane.Townsel@beaumont.edu or call 248-551-7695. We look forward to the continued support of the members of Sharing & Caring.

**A Message from Dr. Stender:**
The research team at Beaumont Health System is proud to report that we are one of 34 hospitals nationwide to have received an NCORP grant which will enable us to continue to bring clinical trials and therefore cutting edge treatments to our patients. Clinical trials of today bring us the new standards of care we use now and will use in the future.

This month we would like to introduce S1202- a randomized trial of duloxetine in women taking aromatase inhibitors who are experiencing joint pain. This 6 month trial addresses one of the most bothersome side effects of AI’s - joint related aches and pains. Preliminary data indicates that duloxetine (Cymbalta) may relieve or reduce these symptoms, allowing women to continue on adjuvant AI’s for breast cancer.

If you or someone you know is post-menopausal, taking anastrazole (Arimidex), letrozole (Femara), or exemestane (Aromasin) and experiencing joint pains felt related to one of these medications, please ask your oncologist if you would be appropriate for the trial or call Pam Lovera RN, BSN, Cancer Clinical Trials, at 248-551-2993 for more information.

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The information in this newsletter is not intended as a replacement for medical care. The advice of your physician should take precedence in your health care matters.