

Fall 2021

LiveWell



THE WENDT CENTER GAVE ME HOPE

MORE FROM THE WENDT REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

One Year of the Integrated Cancer Center

The Importance of Screenings

All Aboard the S.S.S.

Lung Cancer Screenings

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UnityPoint Health
Wendt Regional Cancer Center

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About the Wendt Regional Cancer Center



The Wendt Regional Cancer Center has been Dubuque's leader in radiation oncology for more than 30 years. Over the past three decades, we've worked to bring the most advanced cancer care to the community. Our team is comprised of experienced and qualified professionals, who deliver a second-to-none experience for every patient.

At the Wendt Center, we ensure our patients have an outstanding experience. Our patients and families matter to this world, and every member of the Wendt Center team is here to remind them of that. We've developed comprehensive programs and patient support services that position the Wendt Center as a leader in cancer care. From our oncology navigation services, available to all cancer patients free of charge, to prevention and healing services including lung screenings, genetic counseling, nutrition counseling and oncology rehabilitation - we continually invest in programs that make our patients more comfortable and our community healthier.

In September 2020, the Wendt Center made it easier and more convenient to receive medical and radiation oncology by partnering with Grand River Medical Group to form the Integrated Cancer Center. This partnership proves that Dubuque's cancer care leaders are stronger together, as medical and radiation oncology services are offered in the same location.

Most importantly, we believe how we make patients and their families feel matters most. Read first-hand experiences from our patients about their Wendt Center journey and how the Wendt Center care team is a partner who is with you every step of the way throughout cancer treatment. We look forward to continuing to show our patients and our community how committed we are in delivering exceptional care experiences that go beyond treating cancer - it's about showing you what matters most.



365 days. 52 weeks. 1 year.

Together, Dubuque's cancer care leaders at the UnityPoint Health - Wendt Regional Cancer Center and Grand River Medical Group's Medical Oncology Clinic have been providing coordinated cancer care to patients and their families in the Tri-State area, in one location - the Integrated Cancer Center.

The Integrated Cancer Center opened its doors in late September 2020, providing cancer patients in the Tri-State area with a comprehensive approach to cancer treatment by creating a combined space for medical and radiation oncology services. The skilled care team at the Integrated Cancer Center includes staff from a variety of specialties, such as medical and radiation oncology, therapy, dietary, and other support services. Our providers are Mark Hermann, MD and Tony Heiar, ARNP for medical oncology services and Paul Lindholm, MD for radiation oncology services.

"There has been a long-standing relationship with Grand River Medical Group providing medical oncology services for this system," Paul Lindholm, MD, Wendt Regional Cancer Center, said. "The biggest advantage has been co-locating us to facilitate communication between physicians, which makes it easier for my staff to coordinate combined cancer care treatments between medical and radiation oncology."

At the Integrated Cancer Center, patients, caregivers, and cancer survivors have access to a superior combination of support services, clinical staff and multi-disciplinary care including services such as oncology navigation, genetic counseling, oncology rehabilitation, and support groups.

Over the past year, the Integrated Cancer Center has welcomed patients from across the Tri-State area into the state-of-the-art facility for cancer treatment and services.

"It's all about patient experience," Mark Hermann, MD, Grand River Medical Group, said. "It's hard enough to be diagnosed [with cancer] and then go through treatment. Everything else that you can do to try to make that process and journey easier for the patient is the most important thing."

Just as the experienced care teams at the Integrated Cancer Center have done for the past year, they will continue leading cancer care in the Tri-State area yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

To learn more about how Dubuque's cancer care leaders are stronger together, visit unitypoint.org/integratedcancercenter.

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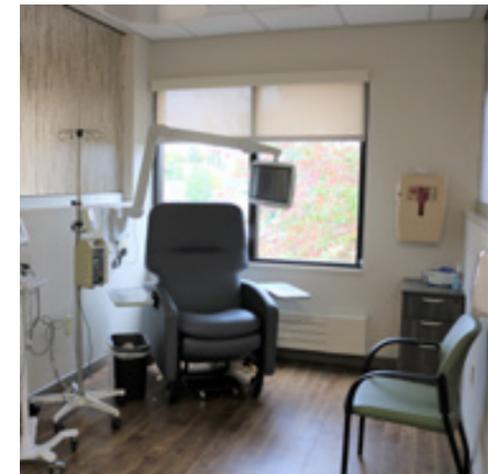
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Left: The waiting area inside the Integrated Cancer Center. Middle: The Linear Accelerator delivers radiation therapy at the Wendt Regional Cancer Center. Right: An infusion bay in the Grand River Medical Group Medical Oncology Clinic.



THE WENDT CENTER GAVE ME HOPE

Sunshine Circle Volunteer Chooses Wendt Center for Treatment



Jeannie Beckmann volunteering in the Sunshine Circle Gift Shop at UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital.

When Jeannie Beckmann watched her mother go through a breast cancer diagnosis and pass away in 2018, it was quite challenging - physically, mentally and emotionally.

But, in early 2021, that cancer diagnosis became even more personal, as Jeannie was diagnosed with breast cancer herself.

Knowing her mother had breast cancer, Jeannie's care team decided to pursue genetic testing, where it was determined Jeannie had the chek2 gene - a genetic marker of enhanced risks of developing breast and colon cancers.

"I wanted to move forward with the genetic testing for the fact of knowing," Jeannie said. "I did it right here in Dubuque at the Wendt Center, and everyone was wonderful. Once we got the results back, I was explained everything in terms I could understand and how this could impact my cancer care."

Jeannie's cancer care journey began with surgery, followed by 21 rounds of radiation at the Wendt Regional Cancer Center.

"They made me feel good every single day."

"The Wendt Center gave me hope," Jeannie said. "That is one of the biggest things when you have cancer, especially when you are dealing with it personally."

Throughout her journey, Jeannie knew she was going to be supported every step of the way by the Wendt Center staff.

"It was amazing to have that support team here," Jeannie said. "They made me feel good every single day, and I was always excited to come and see them. They just make you feel good about everything and for a little while, they make you even forget that you are going through a cancer diagnosis."

On August 17, Jeannie reached the end of her radiation treatments and had a lot to celebrate. At the beginning of her appointment, Jeannie was presented with a comfort bag from the Pink Hummingbird Project that was complete with a blanket, neck pillow, lotions, and other comfort care items. The Pink Hummingbird Project is a local organization raising cancer awareness and providing patient support, in memory of a woman that passed away, following a courageous battle with breast cancer.

The meaning behind Jeannie receiving that bag was a vivid reminder of what she had gone through as a breast cancer patient.

"I got a bag with a blanket, a neck pillow, fuzzy socks, and lotion," Jeannie said. "The staff told me these bags were donated by an organization of a special person that lost their mother to breast cancer. It was after they handed me the bag and told me I was a Wendt Center Warrior when I started becoming emotional about my last day of treatment."

Jeannie was greeted with cheers and claps after walking out of the treatment room on her final day of radiation therapy.

A sight she won't soon forget.

"When I walked out, they were all there cheering for me - every one of them that was there that day," Jeannie said. "They have all just been so wonderful, so when I rang that bell, there were a lot of emotions - scared, happy, grateful."

With her radiation therapy complete, the next phase of Jeannie's cancer treatment is beginning hormone therapy, under the direction of Dr. Mark Hermann of Grand River Medical Group.

As a proud breast cancer survivor, Jeannie is looking forward to doing the things she loves, such as volunteering at Finley Hospital, gardening and spending time with her family.

After going through a cancer diagnosis, Jeannie now has a special outlook on life.

"I'm looking forward to living a life of gratitude with a very bright future," Jeannie said. "I take each day and look at it as a blessing. I've made it this far, and I plan to make it a lot longer. I know a positive attitude has gotten me this far, and it hasn't been easy."

Finley Hospital and the Wendt Regional Cancer Center have a special place in Jeannie's heart, as she is a valued volunteer in the Sunshine Circle Gift Shop.

As a Sunshine Circle volunteer, Jeannie works in the gift shop at Finley Hospital and previously rounded to patient rooms with goodies from the gift shop.

"I love helping people," Jeannie said. "That is why I love volunteering at Finley Hospital and giving back. Finley Hospital is my hospital and my everything. All of the ladies I have a chance to volunteer and work with truly are wonderful."

When she isn't a patient at the Wendt Center or a volunteer in the Sunshine Circle Gift Shop, Jeannie is known as grandma or "Nono" to many.

A wife, mother of two, and grandmother of four, Jeannie loves her family, which she considers to be her biggest achievement in life. One special person in her family is her husband, Joe, who has been her source of support and strength throughout her cancer diagnosis.

"They are my whole world," Jeannie said. "My husband drove me to every one of my treatments. He was my biggest support throughout all of this."

In addition to her family, Jeannie has been overwhelmed by the support and prayers she received from friends and a special group of ladies in her life - her fellow Sunshine Circle volunteers.

"I had so much support from family, friends, neighbors and especially the Sunshine Circle," Jeannie said. "They sent me special messages of care and support, which are still being received to this day. Prayer chains were started immediately by many of my friends, and I am a big believer in the power of prayer."

After experiencing the compassionate care at the Wendt Center, Jeannie knows her choice for where to receive cancer treatment was exceptional.

"If you ever need someone to support you through a journey for any type of cancer, you will never be sorry for choosing the Wendt Center," Jeannie said. "They are the ones who will take care of you, hold your hand through it all and be your biggest support team, always. All of the days I came here for radiation, I kept thinking this is where I need to be."

To learn more about the radiation therapy at the Wendt Regional Cancer Center, call **(563) 589-2468** or visit unitypoint.org/wendtcenter.

All Aboard the S.S.S.

Support, Care Make the Difference for Prostate Cancer Patient

Back in 2015, Dan Schroeder of Guttenberg, had a blood test done for a requirement for his insurance company. That blood test led to an unexpected diagnosis of prostate cancer.

Due to his young age, Dan elected to have robotic surgery with Dr. Alex Horchak of UnityPoint Clinic Urology. Upon biopsy, it was determined six of the 12 areas under inspection were cancerous.

After the initial diagnosis in 2015, Dan was doing well. A few short years later, his prostate-specific antigen (PSA) numbers began to increase and eventually, it was determined the cancer had returned.

This time, Dan knew he would have to undergo radiation therapy treatments, so he chose Dubuque's leaders in radiation therapy - the Wendt Regional Cancer Center.

"Everyone is friendly and makes you feel comfortable," Dan said. "They couldn't believe that back in 2015 I had all of my organs yet. I had never had a surgery in my life, so being diagnosed and going through cancer was nerve-racking for me anyway. So, to have someone who is friendly and makes you feel at ease was really important."

One of the quality components to Dan's cancer care journey was the support he felt every step of the way, whether it was from the Wendt Center staff or his own friends and family.

Dan and his wife, Nancy, took advantage of the Wendt Center's patient financial assistance program.

"They have helped us out with the financial burden," Nancy said. "That has helped tremendously. We've been able to just have him heal. They have been really good at helping us out with that."

The patient financial assistance program at the Wendt Center is made possible by the John and Mabel Heinen Family Fund to specifically support medical care and the well-being of oncology patients who are experiencing a need. This funding is available to help pay medical bills, provide transportation to and from appointments, and assist with housing, utilities, and food.

Throughout his cancer treatment journey, Dan and his support system have been all aboard the S.S.S., or Schroeder Support Squad. Dan's family and friends used T-shirts and bracelets to show their support during his fight against cancer.

Whether he needed a ride to an appointment or an uplifting note from a family member, Dan and Nancy never felt like they were alone on this journey.

"I come from a big family, and he has one brother," Nancy said. "Having the support here, so I can continue working is helpful. We have so many people that are willing to bring him in for treatments, and we have a lot of support. It really does mean a lot."

While being treated at the Wendt Center, Dan found additional support from his care team, from the receptionist to radiation therapists.

He could count on the Wendt Center staff to be a source of positivity when he needed it most.

"It felt like a sign of hope when I was able to ring the bell."

"I don't like these kinds of situations," Dan said. "They make you feel more at ease and not so scared. It can be easy to get into a dark spot when going through something



Dan and Nancy Schroeder, of Guttenberg, were all aboard the S.S.S. during Dan's battle with prostate cancer.

like this. It's nice to come here and get treatment and see someone smiling."

On September 30, Dan reached a milestone in his cancer treatment journey - his final day of radiation therapy. To commemorate this achievement, cancer patients ring a bell at the Wendt Center and have a chance to celebrate with members of their family and care team.

It was a special way to celebrate the bravery, courage, and determination Dan put into his cancer treatment journey and marked the end of his treatments.

"I was finally done," Dan said. "It felt like a sign of hope when I was able to ring the bell."

As Dan and Nancy reflect on their Wendt Center experience, they know one thing to be certain - the care they received at the Wendt Center was local and personal.

"If you need cancer or radiation treatment, come here," Dan said. "You don't have to travel to the bigger cities to get just as good of care, if not better. They also truly care about what you are doing outside of treatments, too."

Nancy felt the Wendt Center staff showed her and her husband just how much they mattered to this world.

"They make you feel like more of a person, instead of just a number," Nancy said. "I think in your big cities, it may not be as personable."

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men, next to skin cancer. About 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime.

"Cancer awareness is a good thing," Dan said. "You don't want to hear it, but when you do hear about it, you aren't as freaked out by it."

Raising awareness of prostate cancer is important to Dan and Nancy, because men often don't want to talk about prostate cancer or health concerns.

"With prostate cancer, it's a guy thing," Nancy said. "They don't want to talk about it. The awareness, especially for prostate cancer, where it's not talked about a lot is a good thing. It's important to have the support and education when it comes to things like this."

For more information on a cancer consultation at the Wendt Regional Cancer Center, please call **(563) 589-2468**.

The Importance of Screenings

Peggy Hanson's Breast Cancer Journey

“The support from my family and friends and from the Wendt Center too, it meant a lot.”



Peggy Hanson underwent radiation therapy following a breast cancer diagnosis.

When Peggy Hanson was told she had a lump in her breast during her annual physical, she wasn't that worried. In her mid-forties with no risk factors, she surely didn't expect cancer.

“I just had a feeling that it was just a cyst and it was nothing,” Peggy said. “I had no history of breast cancer in my family.”

She was shocked in mid-April when Dr. David Oppert, MD, of Dubuque Surgery, gave her the biopsy results: Grade 1 breast cancer.

As she told family members the news, they quickly rallied around her.

“I told my one sister and she was calling cancer centers before I was,” Peggy said. “It probably took through that weekend for it to sink in for me.”

The Sherrill resident started her cancer treatment journey with surgery, followed by radiation therapy at the Wendt Regional Cancer Center - Dubuque's leader in radiation therapy.

“If I had questions, they were always there answering them for me.”

Her team of compassionate, caring providers kept her informed every step of the way as she learned about her diagnosis and treatment plan.

“It was nice that it was convenient and close for me to come to Dubuque, since I had to go every day,” she said. “If I had questions, they were always there answering them for me.”

Peggy appreciated how the staff showed her how much she matters to this world, instead of being treated like just another patient or appointment.

“Sometimes the nurses felt more like family or friends,” she said. “You're seeing them every day, they made it feel like you're welcome. They always said ‘Hi Peggy, how are you today? It's always nice to be greeted by your first name.”

When she began to experience treatment side effects, the staff was quick to respond to her concerns and gave her multiple creams to alleviate itching or pain. They paid attention to even the smallest of details. During her first treatment, Peggy was given a bag of comfort items, like lotions, a blanket, Chapstick, and a neck pillow.

When it came time to celebrate the end of her cancer treatment, Peggy will never forget her final day of radiation therapy.

The Wendt Center staff applauded as she rang the bell, surrounded and supported by her family and friends.

“It was exciting,” she said. “It's crazy how you look at something different now that it has happened to you. I still look back at it as like, I can't believe it.”

Today, Peggy takes Tamoxifen and follows a six-month check-up schedule. She appreciates how closely her care team is monitoring her, post-treatment.

Her advice to anyone fighting cancer is simple: lean on your support circle and stay positive.

“The support from my family and friends and from the Wendt Center too, it meant a lot,” Peggy said. “I'm the type of person I cry at the drop of a hat and the littlest thing that somebody would do, it would just make my day. I was very glad I went to the Wendt Center.”

Peggy is now back to work in the kitchen at Clarke University and is excited to spend time with her husband Marc and their three children, Paige, Brooke and Blake.

Looking forward to spending time with them made all the treatments worth it.

“I know it's just a summer - I told myself I just need to get through this summer and hopefully next summer we'll be able to get a family vacation in,” she said.

Peggy credits her annual physical for catching her cancer early and encourages women to keep up with other screenings like mammograms and self-breast exams.

“If you would've told me in March I was going to have cancer, I would have said you're crazy,” she said. “It's very, very important to get your screening every year. It saved my life.”

To learn more about 3D mammography at Finley Hospital, visit unitypoint.org/mammo.

Meet our Oncology Nurse Navigators

No one should go through a cancer diagnosis alone. At the Wendt Regional Cancer Center, our Oncology Nurse Navigators are there every step of the way, from the initial diagnosis to the end of treatment and beyond.

Oncology navigation refers to the individualized assistance offered to our patients, families, and caregivers by a knowledgeable registered nurse (RN). This role helps cancer patients navigate through the complex system of health care, so they can focus on their care and needs and most importantly - overcoming their cancer diagnosis.

Our Oncology Nurse Navigators assist cancer patients with a variety of services, including helping to understand a cancer diagnosis and treatment options, guiding through the treatment process, coordinating care between hospital and home (i.e., transportation to and from appointments), educating patients, supporting a patient and their family emotionally, assisting with finding and funding wigs, scheduling low-dose lung screenings and assisting with financial support through the endowment from John and Mabel Heinen. At the Wendt Center, oncology navigation services are provided free of charge to any cancer patient and their family or caregivers.

The Oncology Navigation Team is comprised of the two nurses at the Wendt Regional Cancer Center, Julie Bartmann, RN and Mary Carol Batteram, RN, OCN - a duo with over 79 years of nursing experience.



Julie Bartmann, RN

Julie became a nurse in 1982, after she went through a courageous battle with osteosarcoma, or bone cancer. "I had always wanted to be a nurse but this helped push me along," Julie said. In 1986, Julie started as a nurse at UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital and graduated from the University of Dubuque in 1991 with her BSN degree. Throughout her time at Finley Hospital, Julie has worked in the initial oncology unit, general surgery and

orthopedics, ICU, and most recently, the Wendt Center since 2008. "All of the departments I've worked in at Finley have broadened my ability to care for our cancer patients," Julie said.



Mary Carol Batteram,
RN, OCN

Mary Carol received her nursing degree from the Finley School of Nursing in May of 1981, the same time she joined the nursing staff at Finley Hospital on the surgical floor. It was on that floor when Mary Carol discovered her passion for caring for oncology patients, as this was where in-house chemotherapy was done. "That's where my love for oncology patients started," Mary

Carol said. She started in the Wendt Center in February of 1991, under the direction of Dr. Thomas Lally. Throughout her Finley nursing career, Mary Carol has been part of the Professional Development Program and American Cancer Society Relay for Life fundraising team, in addition to helping with the cancer support group and obtaining her oncology certified nurse (OCN) certification in 2008.

To learn more about the experienced Oncology Navigation Team at the Wendt Center, call (563) 589-2468 or visit unitypoint.org/nursenavigation.

Lung Cancer Screenings During the COVID-19 Era

With all of the attention lately around the COVID-19 pandemic, it is time to also turn our attention back toward routine healthcare and cancer screenings. In terms of cancer care, most people, intuitively, would think that the earlier most cancers are diagnosed, the better the outcome. Certainly, for the most part, this is true. There have been several simple and inexpensive screening tests that have greatly reduced cancer morbidity and mortality and a few good examples of that are pap smears for cervical cancer, mammograms for breast cancer, colonoscopies for colon and rectal cancers, PSA for prostate cancer and general visits to your primary care provider. Interestingly, COVID-19 has also contributed to incidental findings, primarily on chest CT imaging, of some routine common cancers, as well as a few very rare findings that would have gone without detection.

I have had patients with early, treatable lung cancers, discovered with COVID-19 evaluation and treatment. I have also had patients with metabolic abnormalities/ findings that mimic recurrent lung cancer that have been symptoms of COVID-19.

All of this has made me think of one type of cancer screening that has always been a bit more controversial and has been a bit more difficult to develop an effective screening tool for - lung cancer. Most lung cancer screening attempts have focused on imaging or radiological tests. There have been studies in the past that have focused on routine chest X-rays. This has generally not been an effective enough tool to contribute much from a cancer screening standpoint.

In more recent years, the development of low-dose chest CT scans has sparked an interest in the possibility of lung cancer screening. The key, however, is identifying a population, with a high enough risk, to benefit. The group of patients is found in the part of the population that continues to smoke, primarily cigarettes. While the real key to reducing morbidity and mortality of tobacco and smoking products is to discourage their use, perhaps screening programs can allow healthcare providers not just to find earlier cancers, but to also intervene with cessation counseling.

Shared decision-making is important when clinicians and patients discuss screening for lung cancer. The benefit of screening varies with risk because persons at higher risk are more likely to benefit. The decision to undertake lung cancer screening should involve a thorough discussion of the potential benefits, limitations and harms of screening. This can potentially minimize the downside and thus, maximize successful outcomes. If it is determined as lung cancer, there are newer, less invasive treatment modalities, such as Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT), which is a very easily tolerated outpatient procedure.



Paul Lindholm, MD

If you are considering lung cancer screening, it is important to please try and quit smoking. I think the evidence would say that with all of the COVID-19 mitigations and restrictions, we have all been a bit more likely to lapse into bad habits.

To all of you who may have been more focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, let's make certain we do not move forward neglecting our own routine healthcare and maintenance, as well as the health and well-being of children, physically and mentally.

Let's get back to our normal lives - go and see your doctor and don't forget your mammograms, pap smears, colonoscopies and lung cancer screenings.

To learn more about lung screenings at the Wendt Regional Cancer Center, call (563) 589-2549 to talk with a Lung Screening Counselor.

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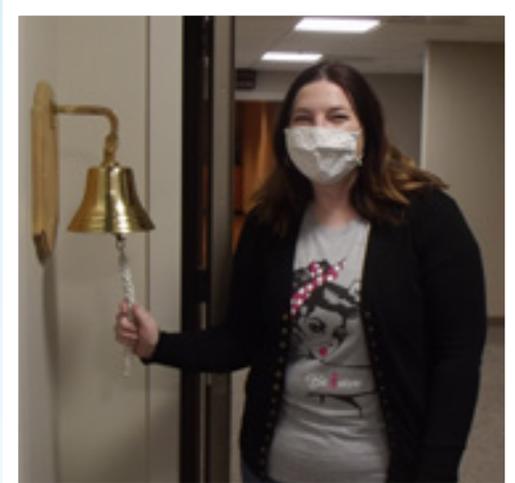


On our Facebook page, Wendt Regional Cancer Center, you can find the latest news and information about our cutting-edge cancer services, inspirational patient stories and useful health tips from the area's leader in cancer care!

To fight cancer, it takes determination, courage and bravery. We are proud to introduce our #WendtCenterWarriors exclusively on our Facebook page as a tribute for their efforts during their treatment journey. You will find photos of our brave cancer survivors who have rang the Wendt Center bell to signify the end of their treatment and more notably, their achievement of overcoming cancer.

We believe no one should go through a cancer diagnosis alone, so Dubuque's cancer experts at the Wendt Center are here every step of the way with resources, support, and services to help our patients. The Wendt Center knows how much you and your loved ones matter to this world, and we'll show you just how much.

#WendtCenterWarriors



Breast cancer survivor, Janet McQuillen, of Dubuque, rings the Wendt Center bell.

LEADING CANCER CARE.

Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow.