

Oncology Committee 2019 Report

THE COMMISSION ON CANCER is a group of professional organizations dedicated to improving survival and quality of life for cancer patients through standard-setting, prevention, research, education and the monitoring of comprehensive quality care. In 2020, Cambridge Medical Center's (CMC) oncology team will be surveyed by the Commission on Cancer (CoC) for the third time and hope to renew our 3 year accreditation.

In 2019 the Oncology committee worked to continue to meet the CoC's standards and eligibility requirements and met four times during the year. Committee membership is defined by the CoC and required members, or their designated alternate, are required to attend at least 3 of the meetings.

The required members are Dr. Vijay Rao, Oncologist and Cancer Liaison Physician; Dr. Anasooya Abraham, General Surgeon; Dr. Dana Nelson, Pathologist; Dr. Thomas Matson, Radiologist; Pam Whitehead, Cancer Program Administrator and Patient Care Manager; Jocey Wiedewitsch, Social Worker; Nicki Klanderud, Community Engagement & Wellness Manager; Crystal Lifto, Manager Quality, Risk, and Safety; Vickie Matthias Hagen, Genetic Counselor; Kristi McCarty, Oncology RN; and Leann Osada, Certified Tumor Register.

The committee also includes representation from Administration, Nutrition Services, Pharmacy, Lab, Radiology, Allina Palliative Care, Clinic Services, Courage Kenny Rehab Institute, the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute Clinical Service Line, and the American Cancer Society.

There were some physician changes in 2019 with the departure of Dr. Elizabeth Gunderson, and the transfer of Dr. Arvind Vemula to Buffalo. Dr. Vijay Rao started as CMC's full-time Oncologist in June and Brenda Fischer, Nurse Practitioner, joined the CMC Oncology team in December and will see patients at CMC on Thursdays and Fridays.

In 2019 we started to offer lung cancer screening with low dose CT scans to patients' ages 55-74 who have smoked for 30 years or have quit smoking within the last 15 years. In 2019, 245 lung cancer screenings have been done at CMC. Interested patients need to consult with their primary care physician and have a shared decision making visit.

The Commission on Cancer standards and eligibility requirements need to be met annually. Some of the projects completed by the Oncology Committee in 2019 were:

- A quality study on the Oncology Program space comparing distance of CMC's Infusion department, Oncology Clinic, and Lab to six other Allina regional sites and the three nearest competitors. The study showed that at most sites the Infusion department and Oncology Clinic are adjacent to each other.
- A quality study was completed on lab timeliness by reviewing charts over a 4-week period. This led to a quality improvement project focused on patient arrival times early enough so lab work is completed prior to their Oncologist visit.

- A quality improvement project was completed on improving the safety for new chemo patients which outlines the steps to take if a patient has a serious reaction to chemo.
- An audit monitoring compliance with evidence-based guidelines. Dr. Vemula reviewed the charts of the twenty-three patients who were diagnosed with non-colon digestive cancers in 2017–2019. The first line of treatment was compared with the NCCN guidelines and the audit showed that the NCCN guidelines were met in each case.
- Cancer prevention booths at the April 3, 2019 CMC employee health fair. The event was attended by over 330 employees and volunteers. Radiology employees offered breast exam education and mammography scheduling and scheduled eight mammograms. Information was shared about CMC’s Lung Cancer Screening with low dose CT scans. A representative from Statewide Health Improvement Program shared information on tobacco use in our youth; e-cigarettes; vaping; and tobacco cessation resources for our youth.
- Each year the Oncology Committee needs to establish a barrier to cancer care, and in 2019 the barrier chosen was “Progressively complex insurance plans with high deductibles and increased prior authorization requirements, in a population which has a very high rate of poverty, unemployment, and no insurance.” Jocey Wiedewitsch, CMC’s clinic social worker, works closely with patients to assist them with the complicated insurance processes and on finding other funding and grant opportunities. All Oncology employees are working together to focus on the new and frequently changing prior authorization requirements.
- A breast screening event was held on September 19, 2019 in cooperation with the SAGE program. Five women were screened with a breast exam by Dr. Amy Hauptert and six patients completed screening mammograms. Patients were treated with snacks and gift bags. The effectiveness of the event was evaluated by a survey completed by five participants and the results were very positive. ■