



EXCEPTIONAL CARE AND DEDICATION ARE REWARDED

by Margit Bretzke, MD

The Piper Breast Center is the first breast center in Minnesota, and one of 70 sites in the U.S., to be awarded full accreditation by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC), which is administered by the American College of Surgeons to identify excellence in breast care.

Accreditation is granted only to those breast centers that voluntarily undergo a rigorous evaluation process and review of performance in providing the highest levels of quality care. The NAPBC evaluates facilities on the comprehensive nature of care, commitment to a multidisciplinary approach, research, community outreach, professional education and quality improvement programs.

Michael Wertheimer, MD, a surgeon with Harvard University Medical School and Cambridge Hospital's Breast Center, reviewed documentation prepared by Piper Breast Center leadership and visited in person before preparing his recommendation. His final report noted 100 percent compliance with NAPBC standards and stated that Piper Breast Center "should be studied and used as a teaching model" for breast centers. He praised physicians and staff as "remarkably dedicated and collaborative" and observed "wonderful adjacencies with the other departments which facilitate seamless integration of the disciplines and easy patient flow."

This independent review validates the quality of care at Piper Breast Center as compared to other breast centers across the country. We are always looking for new ways to improve the care we provide to patients and are proud of this recognition.

DID YOU KNOW?

by Stephanie Remark, RT (R)(M)

Beginning January 2010, you can look forward to some changes within Piper Breast Center. Breast imaging patients will no longer be asked to complete a history form while waiting for the technologist. This information will be gathered in the breast imaging suite and will be entered electronically into your medical record. You will also see a new look to your breast imaging results that you receive in the mail. The current greeting card style will be replaced with a business sized letter. You can continue to expect to receive these results within five to seven business days.



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**Virginia Piper
Cancer Institute**

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EXERCISE AND LYMPHEDEMA

by Nancy Hutchison, MD, medical director for Cancer Rehabilitation and Lymphedema at the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute and Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation Institute

To exercise or not to exercise—or rather, how to exercise. Those are questions facing breast cancer survivors, especially those with lymphedema.

Lymphedema is an abnormal collection of fluid in the tissues that accumulates because of a reduction in lymphatic circulation. This can occur from surgical or radiation-induced damage to lymphatic vessels or lymph nodes. Following breast cancer surgery, lymphedema is most commonly caused by removal of axillary (underarm) lymph nodes. Lymphedema will occur in up to 60 percent of breast cancer survivors.

A recent New England Journal of Medicine article, “Weight Lifting in Women with Breast Cancer-Related Lymphedema,” offers guidance. Kathryn Schmitz and colleagues studied the effect of exercise on women with lymphedema compared to non-exercisers with lymphedema. The results showed that a slowly progressive fitness and weight training program while wearing a compression sleeve did not increase lymphedema more than it would increase in the non-exercisers. The exercise group reported fewer symptoms and fewer lymphedema flares. Some women in the exercise group did experience lymphedema flares requiring modification of the exercise regimen. All women were followed by personal trainers monitoring the status of the lymphedema.

Exercise is an important aspect of recovery for breast cancer survivors. One study showed that light aerobic exercise for 15 minutes, three times per week, had a survival benefit over no exercise. Exercise can also reduce osteoporosis and heart disease.

Individuals with lymphedema should consult a lymphedema physician specialist or certified lymphedema therapist before beginning a new exercise regimen. The Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute Cancer Rehabilitation and Lymphedema Program, in partnership with the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute, now has nine locations on Abbott Northwestern’s campus and at most Allina hospitals. Physician or nurse practitioner appointments are available in the Cancer Rehabilitation and Lymphedema Clinic for consultation on safe exercise after breast cancer with or without lymphedema. The Cancer Rehabilitation Program partners with the Penny George Institute for Health and Healing’s LiveWell Fitness Center to provide individual consultations with a medically-based personal trainer, exercise physiologist and dietitian in the Fitness Options for Cancer Survivors Program. The National Lymphedema Network publishes guidelines for exercise on its website, www.lymphnet.org.

A TRIBUTE TO LESLIE DIAZ, MD – Lisa J. Schneider, MD

Leslie Diaz, MD, a national and international expert in breast pathology and an integral member of the Piper Breast Center, died in March at the age of 37. The cause of his death was carcinoma of the gastroesophageal junction.

Dr. Diaz received his training at Northwestern University School of Medicine and M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. In his all-too-short career, he authored more than 40 scholarly articles and wrote the seminal papers on breast cancer pathology and hormonal receptor status that are cited at the bottom of many a patient’s pathology report. In 2007, he received a prestigious Susan Komen Breast Cancer Foundation grant of \$100,000 to study breast cancer in minority groups.

In 2006, Dr. Diaz joined Hospital Pathology Associates, PA, and began work at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. His work ethic and fund of knowledge were extraordinary. He was well-versed in breast pathology literature and could always be counted on to add spark and wisdom to the weekly breast cancer conference. Dr. Diaz was truly enthusiastic and readily available for professional consultation.

In his spare time, Dr. Diaz enjoyed travel, skiing and poker but nothing lit up his life more than his wife, Karen, and two-year-old daughter, Olivia. We are grateful that Dr. Diaz served Piper Breast Cancer patients as he did, and we are deeply saddened that he left us too soon.

YOU HAVE CANCER!

by Nancy Cox, RN, healing coach

What images, thoughts or feelings do these words evoke?

The three words may start a time of crisis. A person’s view of the world can change in an instant. Sometimes, in spite of having strong support from family and friends, talking about cancer is awkward and difficult.

Andrea* was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 41. Her tumor was discovered during her initial mammogram. With no history of breast cancer in her family, she was completely surprised by the diagnosis. She received so much new information in a rush. She struggled with sparing her husband and teenage daughters any worry, and with decisions about treatment options.

Fortunately, I was available for Andrea as a healing coach through Abbott Northwestern’s Penny George Institute for Health and Healing. We moved through a relaxation exercise to reduce her anxiety and focused our discussion on more than breast cancer. We talked about how she could access the support system that was available for her and her family. We discussed the roles her spirituality and complementary therapies could play in her treatment and recovery process.

Andrea decided to have a lumpectomy and radiation therapy. For her, this was the best choice—her own decision, providing the best chance of long term recovery. Throughout her treatment, Andrea also used guided imagery and massage therapy, and she met with me several times. She did not need chemotherapy, but other women who do often include acupuncture in their treatment plan because it may effectively manage some side effects related to chemotherapy.

Most importantly: each person facing a life-changing illness can be helped to find his or her own path to healing, and no two journeys are the same.

To schedule an appointment with a healing coach, call 612-863-0200.

*Not patient’s real name.