



## SEEDS OF HOPE

Brachytherapy is one option for some prostate cancer patients

JANUARY 2018

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Patients of all abilities reap the benefits

Aside from skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer for men. About one in seven men will be diagnosed with the disease in their lifetime, and prostate cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death in American men, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS).

The good news is that more men are surviving prostate cancer as treatments improve. Today, more than 2.9 million men in the United States diagnosed with the disease are alive today, the ACS reports.

Surgery and radiation are traditional ways of treating prostate cancer. But another option — prostate seed implants — has emerged as a powerful tool to defeat the disease and preserve quality of life.

“Prostate seed implants are a form of brachytherapy — a procedure that involves placing radioactive material inside the body,” says Neal Bhatt, M.D., a Karmanos Cancer Institute radiation oncologist who treats patients at the Clarkston, Mt. Clemens and Port Huron sites.

“In many cases, internal radiation can be more effective than external radiation for treating prostate cancer. Brachytherapy minimizes radiation exposure to surrounding organs. And because the prostate isn’t surgically removed, brachytherapy may be the best way to preserve the patient’s sexual function.”

In low-dose brachytherapy, a physician implants a permanent strand of 60 to 100 tiny radioactive “seeds” into the prostate. These seeds may also be loose. Low-dose brachytherapy is performed at Karmanos’ Detroit, Mt. Clemens, Clarkston, Port Huron, Flint, Bay City and Petoskey locations.

Prostate brachytherapy has been a treatment approach to prostate cancer for more than 30 years. The treatment has grown more popular again with the advent of computer-based planning.

“Prior to performing brachytherapy, an ultrasound is utilized to image the prostate. These images are used to create a customized plan specific to a man’s prostate to treat the cancer,” Dr. Bhatt says.

# WELCOME



Dear readers,

Happy New Year from the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute. We are pleased to bring you the latest in cancer news and the innovative technology and support services we offer to cancer patients, their caregivers and loved ones.

In this edition, you'll read several stories about Karmanos cancer survivors who are alive today thanks to our specialists who are highly trained on the latest technology. That includes Madeline Thulin of Garden City, Mich., who was successfully treated for liver cancer through cryotherapy, a non-invasive procedure that essentially freezes a cancer tumor to eliminate it.

You'll also read about former lung cancer patient Thelma Heathcott of Shelby Township, Mich., who took part in one of Karmanos' many clinical studies offered throughout the Karmanos Cancer Institute network and is today cancer-free.

We also offer stories about the financial burden of cancer treatments and strategies for how a person can alleviate some of those burdens; the health benefits of exercise while going through cancer treatment; and why taking part in a support group is so beneficial to body, mind and spirit for patients and those who love and care for them.

As Michigan's largest cancer treatment network, we truly offer our patients hope. As editor of Karmanos' Hope magazine, I hope you find this magazine's content educational and inspiring.

**ELIZABETH KATZ**  
EXTERNAL MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER  
KARMANOS CANCER INSTITUTE

## Karmanos HOPE

January 2018

### ABOUT KARMANOS

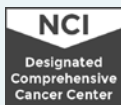
The Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, a McLaren Health Care subsidiary, is one of only 49 National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer centers in the United States. Federal designation as a comprehensive cancer center is the pinnacle of translational oncology research.

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## Cancer support groups help patients cope and heal

Patients can sometimes feel alone on their cancer journey, but the experience doesn't have to be isolating.

The Karmanos Cancer Institute offers a wide variety of cancer support groups for patients, survivors and their families. Groups are offered in most of the communities where Karmanos has a presence, from Detroit to Petoskey and Bay City to Lansing.

Cancer-related support groups range from those addressing breast cancer, brain cancer, prostate cancer and blood cancer, among other cancers, to more general support groups that address cancer survivorship issues, caregiver support, or helping those dealing with grief. Many of the groups throughout the Karmanos network are open to everyone, not just those being treated at a Karmanos facility.

By sharing their cancer stories and emotions with a support group, attendees begin to feel more connected with others, says Kathryn Candela, LMSW, oncology social worker at the Karmanos Cancer Institute at McLaren Macomb, Ted B. Wahby Cancer Center in Mt. Clemens.

"Support groups allow patients to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings," says Candela, who facilitates a women's group called Sisters of Support. "Participants learn they're not alone. By joining a supportive group, people become part of something bigger than themselves and their cancer diagnosis."

Support groups typically meet monthly and have anywhere between 10 and 20 members. Sisters of Support began as a group for breast cancer patients and survivors. It has since expanded to include any cancer type.

"Some Sisters of Support members are in active treatment and focus on controlling their disease, while others are in remission," says Candela. "A whole new perspective comes with a cancer diagnosis. It changes a person's routine radically and the emotions can be overwhelming. As members actively share their stories with the group, they help each other work through their feelings and learn different coping skills."

Candela adds that she hopes to launch a men's support group in the future. She said that it will most likely start as a men's group for all cancers, and then possibly split off into an additional prostate cancer-only support group.

Support groups also play an important role in the healing process, Candela says.

"If not managed in a healthy way, anxiety can impact our physical well-being," she says. "When we give people a chance to express their emotions in a healthy and safe environment, a tremendous amount of healing can take place emotionally, spiritually and physically."

**Support groups at Karmanos are free and available to cancer patients, survivors, family members and the public. To learn more about support groups available at a Karmanos location near you, call 1-800-KARMANOS [1-800-527-6266] or visit [karmanos.org](http://karmanos.org)**

# MANAGING THE COST *of Cancer Treatments*

THERE ARE WAYS TO AVOID FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

**C**ancer impacts every area of a patient's life. It can also create financial problems.

To better understand the economic consequences of cancer survivorship, Karmanos Cancer Institute has recently launched a five-year study of both white and African-American survivors in metro Detroit. A \$729,000 American Cancer Society grant supports the project.

Theresa Hastert, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Oncology at Karmanos and Wayne State University School of Medicine, is leading the study, which includes adults diagnosed with breast, colorectal, lung or prostate cancer since 2013.

"As treatments improve, we're seeing an increase in the number of cancer survivors," Dr. Hastert says. "But patients without adequate financial resources are at increased risk of having lasting debt. Survivors who experience financial hardship are five times more likely to limit treatment in some way—they consciously forgo treatment, skip doctor appointments, or fail to fill their prescriptions."

The diverse survivor base will also help Dr. Hastert and her research team see whether economic burdens differ by race and socio-economic status.

"We want to determine the biggest predictors of financial hardship," Dr. Hastert says. "That will help us identify the most serious burdens experienced by diverse cancer survivors and the best way to address those problems."

## PROVIDING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

While most cancer patients have health insurance, many are underinsured, says Kathryn Smolinski, MSW, JD, director of the Legal Advocacy for People with Cancer Clinic and

assistant clinical professor at Wayne State University Law School.

"They may have high co-pays or high out-of-pocket costs for things that aren't covered," she said. "Most patients rely on their employment as their primary income source. If a patient's job becomes jeopardized, paying for treatment becomes a big issue."

Oncology social workers are very knowledgeable about community and government resources that can help patients manage costs, Smolinski says.

Karmanos Cancer Institute locations in Clarkston, Detroit, Farmington Hills, Lansing, Lapeer, Mount Clemens, Petoskey and Port Huron have oncology social workers on staff. Other Karmanos sites that may not have dedicated oncology social workers can still provide general social work services to cancer patients.

Smolinski adds that patients should review their insurance coverage and ask their oncology social worker to help identify sources of financial assistance. These actions should be part of the patient's treatment plan.

"Social workers can help patients by advocating on their behalf with landlords, mortgage lenders or utility companies. It's never a good idea to let bills pile up," she says.

## CONTACT US

For more information about Karmanos' social work services, call **1-800-KARMANOS** [1-800-527-6266] or visit [karmanos.org](http://karmanos.org).



# KEEPING CANCER *in the Cold*

CRYOABLATION USES FREEZING TEMPERATURES TO DESTROY TUMORS



**MADELINE THULIN**

**A**fter Madeline Thulin of Garden City, Mich., had a successful surgery for renal cancer, she hoped she was done with cancer, for good. But a follow-up exam told a different story.

"I had surgery for renal cancer in 2011," says Madeline, 64. "Two years later, I learned I had liver cancer. I just about passed out when I got the news."

Madeline's doctor referred her to Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit, where she began chemotherapy in early 2014. Still, the liver tumor grew to nearly 4.5 centimeters within a year. She then met with Karmanos' Interventional Oncologist Hussein D. Aoun, M.D., who suggested image-guided cryoablation—something very different from traditional surgery.

"Cryoablation is a minimally-invasive procedure that uses extremely cold temperatures to destroy and treat tumors," Dr. Aoun says. "Under imaging guidance, we insert small needles through the skin into tumors, then create a lethal iceball to treat the targeted mass. The temperature at the center of the freeze approaches -140 degrees Celsius. Once the tumor freezes, the cells die and the body attacks and destroys the tumor. We also extend the frozen area one centimeter beyond the tumor to make sure the iceball covers all margins of the mass."

Doctors use cryoablation to treat localized kidney, liver and lung tumors, as well as soft tissue tumors (in areas such as the chest, abdominal and bone). Since cryoablation numbs surrounding nerves, the procedure is virtually painless. With no incisions, there is no scarring. Patients recover more quickly than after traditional surgery and typically resume regular activities within a day.

"The procedure is very effective, with more than a 90 percent success rate in most locations," Dr. Aoun says. "In the kidney, we have approximately a 97 percent success rate. Risks include bleeding and infection but they're relatively rare at less than five percent."

In April 2015, Dr. Aoun performed the first of two cryoablation procedures on Madeline's tumor. He then performed a second cryoablation on her that September to destroy residual cancer cells. Two years later, Madeline is feeling great with no new or recurring disease.

"Both procedures were incredible—I didn't feel anything and went home the next day," Madeline says. "I feel very blessed. Never give up when facing this kind of adversity. Stay strong, keep fighting and smile as much as you can. Most importantly, trust your caregiver. I'm exceptionally grateful to Dr. Aoun and his staff, who were always very courteous and treated me like family."

## LEARN MORE

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/karmanoscancer/videos> to view a "Facebook Live" conversation with Dr. Aoun about cryoablation techniques and outcomes.

# Life-Saving SCIENCE

## HOW A CLINICAL STUDY HELPED A PATIENT CATCH LUNG CANCER EARLY

A chance encounter with a poster promoting a lung cancer study just may have saved Thelma Heathcott's life.

For several years, Thelma received treatments for a platelet disorder from Salman Fateh, D.O., an oncology hematologist at the Karmanos Cancer Institute at McLaren Macomb, Ted B. Wahby Cancer Center in Mount Clemens. During one visit, Thelma spotted a sign promoting the INHALE (Inflammation, Health and Lung Epidemiology) clinical study, which examined the factors contributing to lung disease.

More than 4,000 current and former smokers across eight sites in the Karmanos network participated in the five-year study—including Thelma. As of now, the study has concluded new patient recruitment.

"I volunteered as a way to help others," says Thelma, 75, of Shelby Township, Mich. "Dr. Fateh said it was free and a simple thing to do. I figured I had nothing to lose."

INHALE participants received a low-dose CT lung screening, a procedure used to determine if patients have lung disease. CT scans can identify small nodules and other lung abnormalities, including early-stage lung cancer.

Thelma had quit smoking 14 years before entering the study and never had symptoms typical of lung disease. So she was stunned to receive an urgent call from her primary care doctor within a few days of her scan.

"She said I had lung cancer and told me to make an appointment with a specialist right away," Thelma says. "I never had that kind of shock before."

Thelma was promptly referred to Dr. Fateh. He said the disease was caught at an early stage and had not been in Thelma's lung long enough to cause symptoms.

"Any cancer diagnosis for a patient, just hearing the word itself, can be devastating," Dr. Fateh said. "But if there is any optimism associated with a diagnosis, it's that it was discovered so early."

Thelma had surgery to remove a small portion of her left lung containing the tumor and some surrounding tissue to see if the cancer had spread. The biopsy came back negative, and Thelma recovered quickly without needing radiation or chemotherapy.

Best of all, Dr. Fateh told Thelma during a recent follow-up appointment that she's cancer-free.

"We had an incredible advantage in catching the disease early," Dr. Fateh said. "With early detection, we can take a very proactive approach favorable to the patient."

Grateful for the care she received, Thelma has encouraged friends and family to volunteer for clinical studies at Karmanos.

"I tell them the study was painless and well worth the time, because you don't know what's hiding inside you," Thelma says. "Had I not taken the test, I might not be here today."



DR. SALMAN FATEH AND THELMA HEATHCOTT

Photo by David Jones

## PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

Clinical studies available through the Karmanos network examine new cancer-fighting drugs, surgical methods, diagnostic tests or prevention methods.

Studies are currently open for breast, gynecologic, lung, pancreatic, prostate and rectal cancers, as well as brain metastases, multiple myeloma and a biobank protocol, where researchers collect diseased tissue for study.

To learn if a clinical study is right for you, call **1-800-KARMANOS** (1-800-527-6266) or visit [karmanos.org](http://karmanos.org).

# The Uplifting Power OF EXERCISE

PATIENTS OF ALL ABILITIES REAP THE BENEFITS

Is it okay for cancer patients to exercise while undergoing treatment? The answer is a resounding “yes,” says Katherine Schaefer, a licensed yoga instructor, massage therapist and Reiki master.

“Exercise activates the muscles, circulates fluids throughout the body, and helps maintain strength and flexibility,” says Schaefer, who leads yoga classes and offers massage and Reiki therapy at Karmanos Cancer Institute’s Lawrence and Idell Weisberg Cancer Treatment Center in Farmington Hills. “Exercise also helps relieve feelings of anxiety and depression.”

With physician approval, patients can pursue a variety of activities, from walking, jogging and yoga to tai chi and strength training. And exercises can be adapted for patients with limited mobility, Schaefer says.

“Movement is important for all patients, including people in a wheelchair or hospital bed,” she says. “A little exercise can go

a long way. Just be sure to exercise in moderation and listen to your body. Pain or fatigue are signals that you need to back off a little bit. It’s important to work on your flexibility and strength, but don’t pursue it as if you’re entering a competition.”

Schaefer says it’s important to exercise daily—just don’t do the same activity each day.

“A variety of exercises not only keeps us from getting bored with our workout routine, it also promotes healing and better overall body function,” she says.

People in Schaefer’s yoga classes often tell her how exercise has impacted them.

“Exercise gives patients the confidence to actively participate in their health management,” Schaefer says. “They often feel more calm and relaxed after exercising—the activity lifts their spirits. And they enjoy the support and camaraderie of the other class members.”

Perhaps the biggest benefit of exercise is helping patients reconnect with themselves, Schaefer says.

“A lot of patients disconnect mentally from their bodies after experiencing pain or undergoing surgery,” she says. “Exercise is an opportunity to connect with the essence of who you are.”

“It’s very fulfilling to receive a positive response from people going through difficulties related to cancer. Offering exercise classes is just one way Karmanos treats the whole patient, not just the disease.”

Always consult your doctor before beginning an exercise program. For more information about the benefits of exercise, visit the American College of Sports Medicine website at [acsm.org](http://acsm.org).



KATHERINE SCHAEFER,  
LICENSED YOGA INSTRUCTOR,  
MASSAGE THERAPIST AND  
REIKI MASTER, GUIDES  
KARMANOS CANCER  
PATIENT LINDA MYERS IN  
A YOGA CLASS HELD AT  
THE INSTITUTE’S WEISBERG  
CANCER TREATMENT  
CENTER IN FARMINGTON HILLS.

Photo by Sean P. Cook

## CONTACT US

For more information about a cancer diagnosis or treatment, call **1-800-KARMANOS** [1-800-527-6266] or visit [karmanos.org](http://karmanos.org).

## SEEDS OF HOPE

Continued from page 1

"During the procedure itself an ultrasound probe is used to create a multidimensional view of the prostate gland on several TV screens. These images are used to place the needles while a computer continues to calculate and make the physician aware of the best spacing. The seeds are like batteries—their radiation charge slowly dies over time."

High-dose brachytherapy is another internal radiation technique. Instead of implanting seeds, the physician inserts 15 to 25 hollow temporary catheters into or next to the prostate, and then use a machine attached to the hollow catheters to deliver a high dose of localized radiation. The physician removes the catheters after the procedure.

High-dose brachytherapy is offered at Karmanos' Detroit, Mt. Clemens, Clarkston and Flint locations.

"The low-dose method is a one-time procedure, while the high-dose method requires two to four visits," Dr. Bhatt says. "Depending on the size of the tumor and the disease location, patients can decide which method they prefer. High-risk patients may have seeds along with external radiation to keep the cancer from spreading."

Prostate seed implants do not require incisions, so patient discomfort is usually minimal. Most patients are treated in the morning, discharged a few hours later and resume their regular activities within a day.

"The most common side effect is a temporary irritation of the urinary stream," Dr. Bhatt says. "But patients can manage this by drinking plenty of water or taking medication."

The best prostate cancer candidates for brachytherapy are patients at low or very early intermediate risk, Dr. Bhatt says. And success rates are exceptional for both low and high-dose techniques.

"There are lots of treatment options for prostate cancer. It's important that patients explore them with a multidisciplinary team of cancer experts, because each treatment has unique side effects. After consultation, we can tailor your treatment toward your lifestyle."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT A  
CANCER DIAGNOSIS OR TREATMENT,  
CALL 1-800-KARMANOS (1-800-527-6266)  
OR VISIT KARMANOS.ORG.**

## Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit, Farmington Hills offers

### OPEN HOUSE TOURS

***The Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute's  
Detroit and Farmington Hills locations are holding  
open door tours. We hope you'll join us.***

Learn more about our National Cancer Institute comprehensive cancer center designation; our state-of-the-science cancer research partnership with Wayne State University's School of Medicine; our 13 multidisciplinary teams, which focus on treating the approximately 200 types of cancer; our clinical trials program, which is one of the largest in the country; and our variety of support services.



#### - TOUR DATES INCLUDE -

February 7, 2018 from 8-9 a.m.

August 7, 2018 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Karmanos Cancer Institute  
Main Campus

4100 John R • Detroit, MI 48201

*Complimentary valet parking will be offered at main campus.*



#### - TOUR DATE -

May 9, 2018 from 4-5 p.m.

Karmanos' Lawrence and Idell  
Weisberg Cancer Treatment Center

31995 Northwestern Highway • Farmington Hills, MI 48334

*Please RSVP one week in advance to  
Denise Lowe at (313) 576-8110 or  
email [lowed@karmanos.org](mailto:lowed@karmanos.org).*

Questions or comments:  
info@karmanos.org

Connect with Karmanos



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## Meet Karmanos' cancer specialists

Karmanos Cancer Institute physicians are specialists in treating all types of cancer, both common and rare. In fact, we like to say at Karmanos, 'Cancer is all we do.' New and potential patients can familiarize themselves with our doctors through our "Meet Our Cancer Specialists" video series.

The videos accompany the physician profiles on Karmanos.org, which provide detailed information about their areas of expertise, research interests and educational background. Currently there are more than 40 videos that have been posted, with doctors from Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit, Farmington Hills, Port Huron and Bay City. This project is ongoing and many videos are currently in production.

Videos are attached to the physician detail pages at karmanos.org. They can also be viewed at <http://bit.ly/2mLnLQT>



## BARBARA ANN KARMANOS CANCER INSTITUTE TREATMENT LOCATIONS

3140 West Campus Drive  
Bay City, MI 48706

43097 Woodward Ave., Suite 100  
Bloomfield Hills, 48302

5680 Bow Pointe Dr.  
Clarkston, MI 48346

4100 John R  
Detroit, MI 48201

31995 Northwestern Hwy  
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

4100 Beecher Road, Suite A -  
Radiation Oncology, Suite B -  
Medical Oncology  
Flint, MI 48532

918 N. Center Avenue  
Gaylord, MI 49735

2901 Stabler  
Lansing, MI 48910

1540 Lake Lansing Road, Suite 103  
Lansing, MI 48912

1295 Barry Drive, Suite B  
Lapeer, MI 48446

1080 Harrington Blvd.  
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

1221 South Drive  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

560 West Mitchell St., Suite 185  
Petoskey, MI 49770

1221 Pine Grove Ave.  
Port Huron, MI 48060