A NEW HOME FOR CARE & COMFORT
THE CANCER CENTER AT ALL SAINTS
When cancer patients such as Steve Donovan receive chemotherapy infusion treatment in the new Cancer Center at All Saints, the expanded space will give them something the old facility couldn’t easily provide—the ability to have loved ones by their side.

“I never brought anyone with me when I went for treatment in the old center,” Donovan said. “The space just wasn’t conducive to it.”

The center serves to meet an increased demand and to accommodate current methods of care delivery. The expansion and renovation has more than doubled the facility’s size, providing patients with a host of new amenities and comfort services. These improvements include a larger infusion therapy area with open, semi-private and private options. With cubicle curtains and individual televisions, the infusion bays are adaptable to meet patients’ needs for privacy and comfort.

“To a large degree, these upgrades mean the world to me,” Donovan said. “Now my wife and family can join me if they want to, and we can spend some time together in that context. It’ll make my family feel better, diffusing the fear, anxiety and mystery of my treatment, and it’ll allow them to gain a better understanding of what it all means.”

If patients and visitors wish to step away, they can visit an outdoor healing terrace to reenergize and to connect with nature. The rooftop terrace is in view from the open infusion bays, bringing warm, natural light into the area.

The rooftop terrace is one of numerous calming aspects that make the new center serene and peaceful. A relaxing water feature greets visitors near the main entrance canopy while warm earth tones cover the center’s walls. Patients can enjoy a meditation room with a waterfall mural and soothing lighting. Expanded
space in Radiation Oncology includes gender-specific, wheelchair-accessible changing rooms and waiting rooms designed to improve privacy and reduce anxiety.

“When patients are calm and comfortable, they are able to focus their energy on healing and getting well,” says Melissa Kacmarsky, Manager of Clinical Radiation Oncology. “In this type of environment, I anticipate patients will be less distracted by their surroundings and more focused on their appointments and treatments.”

The state-of-the-art facility boasts 16 exam rooms—the old facility had 9—and three new consultation rooms that will allow patients’ support network of family and friends to be a part of discussions regarding the plan of care. On the main floor, patients can access health and wellness articles, resources and information on local services in a centrally located resource area. Three education conference rooms serve as convenient locations for support group meetings and training sessions. A designated conference room equipped with video conferencing technology enables physicians to communicate with colleagues around the globe.

The renovations bring the oncology team together under one roof, improving efficiency and communication while increasing convenience for patients.

“All cancer conferences and treatments are now located in one area of the hospital,” says Ann Tomal, Clinical Manager of Medical Oncology. “The close proximity is beneficial for patients and caregivers as we provide comprehensive care and treatment in one convenient location.”

Another improvement is the relocation of the mobile PET/CT unit. Previously located near the Cancer Center’s front entry, its new location at the back of the center improves traffic flow and patient privacy, as it’s equipped with a private restroom, changing room and waiting room.

The physical upgrades to the building and infrastructure are now on par with the exceptional care the All Saints Cancer Center has provided to the greater Racine area for more than 35 years.

“We know that the quality of our care is exceptional, and we want to be able to match that clinical quality as we care for the mind, body, and spirit,” said Susan Boland, President of All Saints. “Our new center will better accommodate our multidisciplinary team as they provide a full range of services to patients and families.”

Donovan agrees.

“The staff at the Cancer Center are second to none,” he said. “And now the new facilities match the high quality of the staff and the care they provide.”
Cancer patients and their families are not alone. During the course of their care at All Saints, cancer patients are supported in their medical, physical and spiritual needs by a team of experts to provide them with the services and care they need for the best possible outcome. From diagnosis to treatment to survivorship, patients at All Saints receive well-rounded, multidisciplinary care that makes a difference.

**Patient Navigators**

Oncology patient navigators guide patients through the health care system. By working one-on-one with patients and their health care providers, trained oncology navigators help to coordinate a patient’s health care services from initial diagnosis to survivorship. They track appointments and identify possible resources to help with any financial issues. They also connect patients to programs, locally and within the organization, which help them cope with their cancer diagnosis.

The support patient navigators provide results in better patient preparedness, improved patient satisfaction and better outcomes, says oncology patient navigator Beth Freitag.

“We’re with patients every step of the way, and we ensure they get the best resources for their needs,” Freitag said. “It’s very individualized.”

**Social Work**

Cancer patients may deal with a host of challenges, ranging from emotional and psychological worries to social and financial concerns. Social worker Christopher David addresses such needs through referrals and links to valuable community resources. Well experienced in issues that may arise, David is skilled at solving issues before they become problems for patients.

“I support patients and the rest of the team to get patients to the finish line of their treatment,” he says. “Patients may not need me today, but they might need me tomorrow, so my door is always open.”
Nutritional Services
Throughout treatment, cancer patients may need assistance achieving or maintaining a healthy weight while preventing unintentional weight loss and nutritional deficiencies. Registered dietitian Molly Corbett is available to provide personalized nutritional assessments, identifying opportunities for nutritional improvement, potential barriers to adequate nutritional intake and ways patients can manage symptoms and side effects that may occur with treatment. By following patients’ progress, she’s able to provide specific recommendations, nutrition education and counseling for each patient.

“It’s a collaborative effort,” Corbett says. “I report findings to the physicians and other team members so everyone is fully aware of the patients’ status and progress throughout their treatment.”

Financial Advocacy
Navigating through the complexities of medical bills and insurance coverage is a daunting task for any patient. Oncology financial advocate Nicolina Swanson helps cancer patients understand their insurance plans and out-of-pocket costs while serving as a liaison between patients and financial assistance programs and charities. By using creative strategies to establish reasonable payment plans, financial advocates such as Swanson aim to reduce financial hardships for patients and their families.

“Everyone needs help at some point. That’s why these programs are available,” Swanson says. “I’m happy to help ease patients’ financial pain.”

Spiritual Care
Prayer is at the forefront of the spiritual care All Saints staff chaplain Rev. Loretta Mendoza provides to cancer patients, but her support also includes a host of therapeutic resources and methods to soothe and comfort. Patients may choose to receive self-care information or learn about coping skills. Relaxation techniques, guided meditation, journal writing and calming bedside music are also offered throughout the healing process. Mendoza is always available to listen, offering a sympathetic ear though phone conversations or in-person visits.

“Patients choose how they want to move forward,” she says. “We are here for them through many different supportive avenues.”

Clinical Research
All Saints offers patients a variety of national clinical studies to answer specific research questions about various health issues, including cancer care. Through well-supported, evidence-based research, many studies compare the national standard of care with new, effective treatments that may prove better than current treatments. Participation is voluntary, giving patients an opportunity to help others by contributing to medical research.

“The growing array of cancer medications and increasingly individualized treatments available today are the direct result of clinical studies done in the past,” says Michelle Czechowicz, a research coordinator at All Saints. “Participating in a clinical study is a good option for patients to consider,” she says, “because these studies impact the future course of cancer care.”

Pharmacy Services
Hospital pharmacists have traditionally worked in the pharmacy to prepare and dispense medications. But with the individualization of the profession, many hospitals have adopted decentralized pharmacy services that bring pharmacists, such as outpatient specialty oncology pharmacist Dave Fucile, closer to patients and professional staff.

Fucile oversees the IV chemotherapy medications at the Cancer Center, ensuring proper dosing, administration, frequency and sequencing of medications. His close proximity to patients and staff allows for effective service and efficient communication, while the outpatient setting enables patients to sleep in their own beds and prepare their own meals.

“Studies have shown that patient outcomes are much better this way,” Fucile says. “We really aim to make it as user-friendly for patients as possible.”

A Team Effort
Cancer survivor Ymelda Quintanilla experienced the efficiency and compassion of the All Saints multidisciplinary cancer care team when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in September 2013. As she went through chemotherapy and radiation treatment, she found the physicians and staff members accessible, patient and understanding.

“When I first started treatment, it was scary,” Quintanilla says. “But the staff was so good. They made me comfortable, and my fear just faded away.”

Staff thoroughly answered all her treatment questions, took time to learn about her grandkids and followed up with her to ensure she received her medication at home.

“They worked together and went out of their way to make sure I had everything I needed,” she says. “And even now, three years later, when I go for follow-up appointments, they’re phenomenal. They clearly care about everyone.”
ALL SAINTS INVESTS IN NEW EQUIPMENT

Cancer treatment at All Saints took three major steps in 2016—each tied to new equipment showcasing the best technology available in radiation treatment.

Chief among the advantages are better, faster and more accurate ways of pinpointing and delivering radiation without damaging surrounding tissue.

“We now have leading-edge, state-of-the-art, top-of-the-line technology,” said Melissa Kacmarsky, All Saints’ Manager of Clinical Radiation Oncology.

One of the new additions is a radiation treatment technique named RapidArc that’s hailed as an improvement over the traditional model in terms of how and where the radiation is administered.

“RapidArc really removed some of the barriers we had been working around for so many years,” Kacmarsky said. “We’d only been able to treat while the machine was stopped. We’d stop. We’d treat... With RapidArc, the machine delivers the beam all the way around the patient without stopping. In some cases, it’s proving to be superior to previously used treatment techniques.”

RapidArc technology is used with another new enhancement at All Saints: a TrueBeam linear accelerator that allows for better focusing on a tumor’s precise shape, thus avoiding radiation hitting surrounding, healthy tissue. TrueBeam shapes the radiation beam to fit the size and form of any tumor. With that information, the technology combines with the RapidArc system to deliver doses with more accuracy and greater speed.

TrueBeam also works around patient movement or motion, which is particularly ideal in breast cancer treatment. In typical delivery of radiation for left-sided breast cancers, some blood vessels and portions of the heart muscle can get exposed to the radiation because of their proximity to the breast. Oncologists at All Saints use a technique called “Deep Inspiration Breath
Hold,” paired with an optical surface monitoring system, which uses cameras and lasers to align patients to their skin contour. Patients hold their breath for about 20 seconds while the machine is on, allowing the diaphragm to fall and the heart move away from the chest wall and breast tissue.

The machine has the ability to detect if the patient moves out of position or breathes out too soon, in which case it stops delivering radiation—helping ensure that the radiation doesn’t go beyond the target tumor.

For larger patients, a CT scan can be an uncomfortable experience. All Saints has confronted that with a new “large bore” CT scanner aimed at comfort and efficiency.

“Before we would either have to send (larger patients) to a place that had a large bore platform, or set them up in a treatment position that maybe was not as perfect as we’d want it to be,” Kacmarsky said.

The machine not only accommodates larger patients, but takes bigger pictures.

“We’re able to get full skin contours of our patients which open up the options for additional treatment angles... The larger field of view allows us to have the ability to treat from angles we weren’t able to treat from before,” she said.

“RapidArc really removed some of the barriers we had been working around for so many years. In some cases, it’s proving to be superior to previously used treatment techniques.”

—Melissa Kacmarsky, Manager of Clinical Radiation Oncology

Treatment times have improved as well. Previously, the average was three patients in an hour. With the new technology, Kacmarsky said, All Saints is able to accommodate up to six patients per hour.

“It also gives us a little more flexibility with treatment times,” she said. “We have a lot of patients who want first thing in the morning or last thing in the day because they have work or have other issues with rides. With the ability to put more patients through treatment per hour, we have more of those prime treatment times available now.”
WHAT DOES THE NEW CANCER CENTER MEAN TO YOU?

More space for patient comfort and care.

We had outgrown the old cancer center quite quickly. Thanks to careful planning and staff input, the increased space and improved features allows us to better manage patient flow and patient volume. The new center spans two floors and includes additional patient exam rooms, a designated education room, and larger areas for chemotherapy and infusion treatments. At the same time, we have room to grow, which is important as we look ahead, determined to keep providing the best care possible.

Compassion during one of the most critical times in a person’s life.

When you’re sick, you need a strong community of friends. By putting ourselves in someone else’s shoes, neighbors can help neighbors. And together we can make things better for cancer patients as they receive compassionate, first-rate care at All Saints. Educators Credit Union believes in giving back. By funding the new cancer center’s family waiting area, we hope the calming environment reduces stress for patients and their families so they can focus on what’s truly important.

Providing hope while offering state-of-the-art care close to home.

My late husband, Dave, received phenomenal care at All Saints during his radiation treatment for lung cancer. Able to avoid the rigors of travel, he conserved his energy and strength. The staff’s personal touch made a huge difference in our journey. They played music to ease his mind during treatment. They frequently sent greeting cards to show they cared. In so many ways, Dave received the best possible treatment and attention. And now, All Saints continues to provide outstanding care in a brand new, state-of-the-art facility.

DIANE CHERNOUSKI
SUPervisor, Oncology Support Services

GENE SZYMczAK
President, Educators Credit Union

KAY SHALBRACK
Assistant Vice President, Baird
As she read her eviction notice, cancer patient Shatoya Epps felt the panic of no options. She worried about where she and her 2-year-old son would live. In addition to getting through her 23-week chemotherapy treatment plan, Epps now had to face uncertainty about her home. Where would she live? How would she find the energy to pack?

Relief came when Epps learned from her physician about the All Saints Hope Fund, which supports cancer patients in active treatment who are in financial need due to their diagnosis and treatment.

“I thank God for the Hope Fund because I really needed some help,” Epps said. “I was going through some things, and without the Hope Fund, I would have been in a messed up situation.”

Based on the premise that no patient should have to choose between paying the bills and receiving the medical treatment they need, the Hope Fund assists with basic living expenses such as rent, mortgage payments and utilities. Since its inception in 2009 through All Saints Foundation, the fund has provided nearly $500,000 in assistance, serving as a vital safety net during times of hardship. Applications are reviewed by a committee, which determines if eligibility requirements have been met.

“A cancer diagnosis shouldn’t result in patients worrying about whether they can remain in their place of residence,” said Christopher David, cancer care social worker at All Saints. “This program helps fill that gap, and gives patients some stability going forward.”

The fund gives patients much-needed breathing room so they can focus on their treatment, said Melissa Kacmarsky, All Saints’ Manager of Clinical Radiation Oncology.

“Instead of being stressed about rent payments and utility bills, patients can focus on healing. They can focus on their doctor appointments and getting healthy and staying active,” she said.

By helping out with daily living expenses, the Hope Fund also gives health care teams valuable time to identify additional needs, make referrals and locate other resources, such as energy assistance programs or additional insurance that can assist patients in the long run.

“The Hope Fund bridges the gap to get patients longer term coverage and assistance, which can get them to a more stable situation,” Kacmarsky said.

For Epps, receiving assistance allowed her to remain in her apartment, easing her mind so she could concentrate on caring for herself and her son.

“The Hope Fund was there for me,” she said. “I’m so thankful there’s help like that in this world. It was a big step for me as I get back on track.”
A NEW ERA OF CARE

It’s important to get to know patients on a personal level. Understanding where they’re coming from helps me formulate a treatment plan to accomplish the desired goal. And by advising patients and answering questions, they leave here comfortable and confident. Radiation therapy continues to offer increasingly sophisticated techniques. With our new TrueBeam linear accelerator, we’ve expanded the scope of available services while allowing for faster patient treatment. It’s one of the many ways the new Cancer Center will improve patients’ experiences throughout their cancer care journey.

Dr. Michael Christensen
Radiation Oncologist

A cancer diagnosis impacts patients and everyone around them. It’s important to provide the services and the environment to help people through this critical juncture. In the arms race against cancer, the newest equipment is the best, and we are fortunate to be making the investments to enhance our technical capabilities. Additionally, the new Cancer Center allows for on-site conferences that will improve the coordination of medical specialists. And our patients will continue to benefit from clinical trials and the compassionate, multidisciplinary care they have come to know and trust.

Dr. James Taylor
Radiation Oncologist

It’s a privilege to care for cancer patients in Racine. I strive to provide excellent medical advice and care because I believe that offering state-of-the-art therapy and providing comforting care are both important. Cancer care often involves not just caring for the patient, but the community behind that patient. We have patients come in with not only family members but friends and neighbors who are eager to help in their caretaking. It’s wonderful to see that, and the new Cancer Center allows us more space to accommodate everyone who wants to be involved with a patient’s care and support.

Dr. Mark Choi
Medical Oncologist
Oncology encompasses all other specialties and involves supporting patients on multiple facets of care. While following evidence-based treatment approaches, I provide individualized care, and strive to treat patients as though I’m taking care of my own family. My goal is to be caring, approachable and dependable. Having had a family member with cancer, I understand that a diagnosis can take a physical and emotional toll on all involved. With new amenities and comfort services, our new facility gives patients more privacy and comfort, helping them to focus on healing.

As the Chief Medical Physicist, I work predominantly with radiation treatment delivery systems and developing optimized treatment plans that are patient-specific, while ensuring that patients receive the intended dosage. With the remodeling of the Cancer Center, patients will significantly increase their chances of eradicating the disease, as they will have improved access to leading-edge technology.

Having worked at one of the nation’s top cancer care hospitals and the world’s oldest and largest private cancer center (Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City), I’ve seen pioneering therapy in action. All Saints is likewise well-equipped to provide exceptional care with advanced technologies and expert staff, and I’m honored to work with such professional teams. Technology in cancer care is evolving at an incredibly fast pace. With brand-new, state-of-the-art equipment, the new Cancer Center stands ready with the latest in radiation treatment and technology. Higher quality care and comfort—that’s what we’re providing for all those who receive treatment here.
All Saints Radiology Manager Terri Waschbisch said she found it therapeutic swinging a sledgehammer into the wall. “I felt a sense of satisfaction and pride because the expansion of the Cancer Center was finally happening,” she said. “In fact, I whacked the wall twice.”

Waschbisch was among the medical and community leaders who had taken part in a wall-breaking ceremony in September 2015 to launch construction of the new Cancer Center. Pounding into the wall of the old cancer center with a golden sledgehammer, attendees literally made their mark on the exciting transition for cancer care in the Racine area.

Waschbisch served as the Cancer Center’s first director when it opened in 1993, as a state-of-the-art cancer treatment center. “That goal has been far exceeded over the years through the enduring support of our community and the compassionate care provided by the staff,” she said. “Every day, I witness the staff’s unrelenting dedication and commitment. I’m so happy they’re being given even more tools and space to care for cancer patients for years to come.”
Architects, construction workers, donors, board members, associates and corporate leaders attended the event, which served as an important reminder of the project’s scope and impact, said nurse Tammy Kowalski.

“We’re so thankful that it’s being built, and we appreciate all the donations, time and effort that people have given to make it happen,” she said.

Overall, the facility will have a calming, patient-friendly atmosphere that will give patients and their families a better experience, Kowalski said. The staff is looking forward to working with patients in a renovated facility.

Frequent appointments and follow-up visits have enabled them to get to know each other on good days and bad days, beyond roles as patients and caretakers.

“Our jobs are so much more than jobs,” Kowalski said. “Our patients are like family and they enrich our lives. We get just as many hugs as we give.”

**Messages of Support**

Before the final steel beam was placed in the framework, associates paused to consider the meaning the new facility holds for them personally. They inscribed the beam with messages of courage, peace and strength. Bible verses, signatures, dedications and messages honoring and remembering family and friends were chosen as permanent testimonials to the vital work of the Cancer Center.

Nurse Lori Stefanski chose to write a nurse’s prayer that hangs in her cubicle, and is often read by associates and patients passing by. *Let me dedicate my life today to the care of those who come my way. Let me touch each one with healing hand and the gentle art for which I stand. And then tonight when day is done, O let me rest in peace if I helped just one.*

“It was something near and dear to me that will forever be a part of the new Cancer Center,” she said. “Even though we don’t see it, we know it’s there, and hopefully it will guide us.”

As they watched construction progress, patients and associates have shared personal milestones such as weddings and new grandchildren. With the opening of the new cancer center they have a milestone in common.

“We see patients accomplish these goals, and we cheer along with them,” she said. “The fact that they share these moments with us is really significant to us. So, we’re all very excited to be a part of that as we also anticipate the opening of the new Cancer Center.”

**A Tranquil Space**

The stones at the new Tranquility Garden have a history. They are the very same stones that adorned the Garden of Hope and Circle of Hope at the original Cancer Center.

Doug Karge, a design-build landscape contractor in Racine created the pond and waterfalls at the original garden more than two decades ago. The project was one of the first ponds he ever built.

“My kids remember me building it,” he said. “They would go back to visit the old pond.”

To create the Tranquility Garden, Karge relocated every stone—nine truckloads in all—along with several trees, plants and benches. The garden was dedicated and blessed at a summer ceremony, and now many patients, visitors and associates relax and reflect in its peaceful environment.

“To see it all come together brought tears to my eyes,” he said.

Karge has been committed to creating a space full of beauty and warmth since creating the original pond in 1993. Back then, as he arranged stones and reviewed landscape plans, he looked up at the building’s windows and saw patients preparing for chemotherapy treatment.

“I knew they were hurting,” he said. “And I thought, ‘If they could just look out here at the garden and enjoy it, maybe it will help them a little.’ And I hope that it has.”

*Nurse Lori Stefanski chose to write a nurse’s prayer that hangs in her cubicle, and is often read by associates and patients passing by. Let me dedicate my life today to the care of those who come my way. Let me touch each one with healing hand and the gentle art for which I stand. And then tonight when day is done, O let me rest in peace if I helped just one.*

*“Every day, I witness the staff’s unrelenting dedication and commitment. I’m so happy they’re being given even more tools and space to care for cancer patients for years to come.”*  
—Terri Waschbisch, Radiology Manager
Q&A

DR. JERRY HARDACRE

What impact does the new Cancer Center have on patient care?

Cancer care has advanced tremendously, and the new center will take us from an era when cancer treatment was proportionately more inpatient than outpatient, to a point where it truly is predominately outpatient. One real advantage is an improved physical layout for the delivery of chemotherapy and radiation therapy and for necessary appointments with the medical and radiation oncologists, as well as significantly more space. The bottom line is that the expanded facility allows us to grow to accommodate our patients’ needs, and that’s what I’m most excited about—an improved facility with a greater capacity for patients to receive treatment with the dignity and respect they deserve.

What level of care can cancer patients expect from All Saints?

The vast majority of cancer treatment can occur right here, close to home, as All Saints offers a comprehensive community cancer program that rivals any similar program in the region. We’ve chosen to demonstrate our high-quality care by undergoing rigorous evaluation by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. For two consecutive survey cycles, we’ve obtained the highest level of commendation in the treatment of all kinds of cancers. By doing so, we’ve clearly demonstrated that we’re meeting the national standards through the use of evidence-based medicine.

These achievements must have tremendous effects on morale from the providers’ perspective.

We’re all very proud of what we’ve accomplished here at All Saints. And while physicians are often the face of a cancer program, we have a complete, dedicated multidisciplinary team here to serve our patients. The enthusiasm and pride over this center touches us all. In it, we’re more physically integrated as we continue to provide exceptional care for the Racine community.

The veteran surgeon shares his thoughts on cancer care at All Saints.

Dr. Jerry Hardacre
Chief of Staff and Vice Chair of the Cancer Committee
Years in Practice: 31
Named a 2016 Top Doctor by Milwaukee Magazine

What will cancer care look like in the future?

There’s no question that as research continues to advance, cancer care will be about identifying individuals who have a genetic makeup that predisposes them to certain types of cancer, and then developing strategies to turn off or repair defective genes. Also, delivery of care will be more proactive than reactive. Instead of performing interventions after cancer has developed, future researchers and physicians will strive to prevent cancer through lifestyle changes and by screening patients and intervening before cancer develops. That’s the future of cancer care. A medical philosophy that’s existed for centuries will dramatically change, and that’s quite exciting.
Medically speaking, fun in the sun can have a dark side.

The sun’s powerful rays can cause skin cancer, the most common cancer in the world. Fortunately, it can be effectively treated when detected early.

Yearly skin cancer screenings and regular self-exams can help catch skin cancer early, said physician assistant Kelly Schneider, who provides skin cancer care at All Saints.

In such exams, patients should look for new moles or growths as well as changes to existing moles. Melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer, can be detected by reviewing its ABCDEs: asymmetry, border, color, diameter and evolution.

Melanomas often have asymmetrical shapes and uneven, irregular borders. Moles with uneven coloring or more than one color can also be a warning sign. In addition, melanomas are often larger than 6 millimeters, about the size of a pencil eraser. A mole that looks different than the others, has evolved in size, shape, color or elevation, or is bleeding, itching or not healing should also be reviewed by a physician, said Schneider.

“Whether a mole or lesion is changing is one of the most important factors,” she said.

The majority of sun damage occurs during a person’s youth, with a strong immune system suppressing the damage, explained Schneider. But people continue to accumulate sun damage throughout their lives, and as their immune system starts to wane as they age, their body can no longer control all the damage.

Seniors in particular should be sun-sensible in their golden years because they continue to accumulate more sun damage.

“Precancerous spots called actinic keratoses start to pop up for most non-African Americans in their late 50s and early 60s, on average,” Schneider said.

Actinic keratoses are usually removed as a precaution, often through freezing, topical creams or photodynamic therapy.

Risk of skin cancer can be reduced by limiting or avoiding exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun. The same goes for tanning beds and lamps. Experts suggest generous use of a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen on all exposed skin throughout the year, even on cloudy days. Seeking shade during the late morning and early afternoon, when the sun’s rays are the strongest, is advised. Protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, pants, wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses also reduce sun exposure. To further enhance sun protection, wearing clothing with a high ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) provides a greater degree of UV protection.

While it may be tempting to bask in the sun specifically to get vitamin D, the American Academy of Dermatology says there’s no scientifically proven, safe threshold of sun exposure that allows for maximum vitamin D synthesis without also increasing skin cancer risk. It instead suggests obtaining vitamin D through food and vitamin supplements.

“In our geographical location, the sun’s rays are not at an angle where the skin can consistently produce vitamin D,” said Schneider. “So there’s no sense in trying. Instead, talk with your primary care physician about taking a vitamin D supplement.”

By consistently preventing sun overexposure, people of all ages can take an active role in reducing their skin cancer risk.

“The more damage that you can prevent,” Schneider said, “the better off you are.”
All summer long, Pink Paddling Power members were busy with practice routines and competitions. This women’s team of dragon boat racers have faced many seasons of challenges locally and overseas, and the practice sessions keep them working like a solid unit.

On the water, the women are so in sync they can paddle and glide with their eyes closed. In conversation, they finish each other’s sentences. They know what it takes to win and they know for certain the challenges that bring this team together.

“We thought life was going to take us along a certain path, but then cancer came along,” said Kathy Christiansen, practice coordinator for the team. “So, we went in another direction,” she said.

Christiansen and her paddling mates are breast cancer survivors who, as they prepare, practice and compete, are walking, living testimonies to the power of All Saints-sponsored cancer care support groups.

Cancer care support groups can provide a vital social outlet for those who may be feeling isolated and anxious. Meetings and conversations allow participants to forge friendships and connections as they share thoughts on treatment experiences, side effects and life as survivors. Educational speakers provide members with up-to-date information on treatment options, medication and
nutrition. There are picnics and holiday parties, and plenty of offers to provide rides to and from treatment. Contributions to All Saints Foundation help assist support groups through supplementary materials and program support.

Established by All Saints Cancer Care Center in 2006, Pink Paddling Power is first and foremost a support group for women who have endured breast cancer. And as they’ll tell you, it’s a bond like no other.

“It’s the idea of having someone who knows something about your journey because they’ve been on a similar journey,” says team member Lee Nehmer.

“We can laugh and we can get teary-eyed because we’ve been in a similar place. That’s the tie that binds. But we don’t focus so much on that journey, really, as we do on the journey of living our lives every day now.”

They’ve decorated bras for Survivors Day art displays and baked countless cookies for fundraisers, all while giving back to other local organizations.

The growing support group is about showing others that there’s life after diagnosis, filled with new friends and unique experiences, says member Kathy Butterfield.

“I never thought there’d be an upside to breast cancer,” she said. “But there is, and it’s Pink Paddling Power.”

The group serves as a powerful force for those whose lives took a temporary detour due to breast cancer, says Christiansen.

“This is the new us. We’ve found our way. We’re together and we are thriving. That’s the gift of cancer.”

Making Connections

For Jim Kroll, an invitation to attend the Us TOO prostate cancer support group in 2000 helped him change his perspective on his diagnosis.

“I walked into the meeting and saw an entire room of smiling men who were survivors,” he said. “It was so important for me to see that. It completely turned my feelings around.”

Kroll has remained an active participant in Us TOO since his diagnosis, helping to impact newcomers in a similar way by sharing his story and offering words of encouragement.

“It really settles their minds and lifts a burden,” he said.

Beyond traditional support groups, All Saints also offers the Look Good, Feel Better program, a complimentary class sponsored by the American Cancer Society for women undergoing radiation treatment and chemotherapy. Demonstrations from a volunteer cosmetologist show women how to use makeup, wigs, scarves and accessories to enhance their appearance and restore self-image and confidence. The class is also an opportunity to connect with other survivors, says Gail Petersen.

“Sometimes, when you talk with family and friends, they try to understand, but they’re not quite there because they haven’t gone through it,” she said. “So, this is a nice way to connect with other women who are going through some of the same issues as me.”

It’s those important connections that has cancer survivor Art Hood faithfully attending Multiple Myeloma support group meetings every month.

“To me, people who don’t go to a support group are missing out,” he said. “We’re family. We laugh and have a good time. We have each other to lean on and we lift each other up.”

“It makes a big difference.”

Support groups such as Us TOO allow patients to connect and share.

For more information about cancer care support groups, please call the All Saints Cancer Care Center at 262-687-5000.
The weight of the new Tranquility Garden’s boulders, which were relocated from the Garden of Hope and the Circle of Hope. The rocks beautifully frame the new pond, which circulates an estimated 25,000 gallons of water per hour while providing a restorative space for patients and their families.

32,000

The square footage of the new Cancer Center, more than twice the size of the original facility. With additional patient exam rooms, spacious chemotherapy and infusion treatment areas and an outdoor healing terrace, the much-needed space allows patients to focus on what’s most important—healing.

1,122

The cumulative experience of all 60 Cancer Center associates including physicians, as of September 2016. From radiation therapists and pharmacists to oncology certified nurses and technicians, this expert team provides innovative, compassionate care close to home.

600

The amount of concrete used for the Cancer Center’s expansion as well as for adjacent site improvements. About 101 tons of fabricated carbon steel comprise the structural steel framing that supports the new facility, which was constructed over 12 months by 120 tradesmen and laborers.
When I was diagnosed in March 2014 with intermediate aggressive breast cancer, I immediately knew where I wanted to receive my treatment: All Saints. There was no question, no hesitation in my mind. All Saints is my hometown hospital, and receiving quality care close to home was important to me.

Today, I give to the Cancer Center at All Saints to thank the physicians and staff who cared for me and saved me. I want them to know how grateful I am for the important work they do every day and for the great care I received.

From the day of my diagnosis to the lumpectomy to the incredible follow-up care, the physicians and staff members were pleasant, genuine, and courteous. I got to know them quite well as they helped me navigate through tough times and complex emotions. Thanks to them, I made it through, and finished my treatment in June 2015. Now I do the best I can in each moment going forward.

Having cancer opened my eyes to the plights of others. Patients struggled to pay bills while also trying to pay for treatment. They had trouble securing transportation to appointments. Seeing all of this broke my heart. I support the Hope Fund because it helps cancer patients in financial need right here in our community. It eases their burdens as they bravely face each day. That is why I choose to give.
As we embark on an exciting new era in cancer care at All Saints, we thank you for your role in the remodeling and expansion of the Cancer Center.

Your support of the hospital, your contributions to All Saints Foundation and your unwavering support of patients and their families have helped us all reach this major milestone together.

Because of your kind words and continued generosity, so many patients face what life presents with inspired dignity and grace. All Saints remains committed to offering the best possible cancer care available. And we remain proud and grateful to have you with us on that journey.