

CMC's Body-Mind-Spirit Approach to Cancer Care

New BeWell program for oncology patients



Sharen Fournier, RN, BSN, M.Ed. (left) and Denise Houseman, MS, Exercise Physiologist (third from left) assist patients Maurice Demers and Jean Aspinwall with custom individualized fitness and education programs to help them regain strength and be well.

"It scares the daylight out of you."

That's how Goffstown resident Maurice "Moe" Demers felt four years ago when he heard the word "cancer." The career social worker, fitness enthusiast, and testicular cancer survivor was about to go through another fight, this time with prostate cancer. Demers had robotic surgery at CMC and, when the prostate cancer recurred, went through radiation treatments. That's when he went to CMC's Wellness Center for medically supervised exercise to counteract the fatigue he felt while undergoing radiation. The track for cancer survivors has him coming to the gym three days a week, not only improving his strength and health but also his spirit and wellness.

"Exercise energized me. It still does now that the cancer is behind me," says Demers, who hasn't had so much as a cold since starting his workouts. "I look forward to going every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I sleep better, my aches and pains go away, and the socialization is tremendous."

Surviving cancer is about more than treating the disease. It's just as important to treat the body, mind, and spirit of cancer

patients. That's why Catholic Medical Center in collaboration with Dartmouth-Hitchcock's Norris Cotton Cancer Center, is launching the BeWell Cancer Survivorship Program, a two-pronged initiative that builds on existing oncology programs to wholly care for those with cancer and those who are high risk.

"We're beginning to understand how much a positive attitude and healthy mind and spirit can help people overcome disease," says CMC Senior Director of Wellness and Risk Reduction Janet Troski, MSN, RN. "This is the most comprehensive approach to supporting cancer

patients and their families in the area." In addition to receiving social services, support groups, and nutrition counseling, patients will have access to a range of therapies and classes to take care of their whole selves through the BeWell Cancer Survivorship Program. Some of these resources include:

- The Wellness Center
- Yoga and mindfulness classes
- Group nutrition classes
- Music, massage and art therapies along with a comfort cart, all available during infusion treatment at the Norris Cotton Cancer Center
- Health enrichment programs for cancer patients

continued on page 2

Medical News

CMC's Body-Mind-Spirit Approach to Cancer Care, continued from page 1

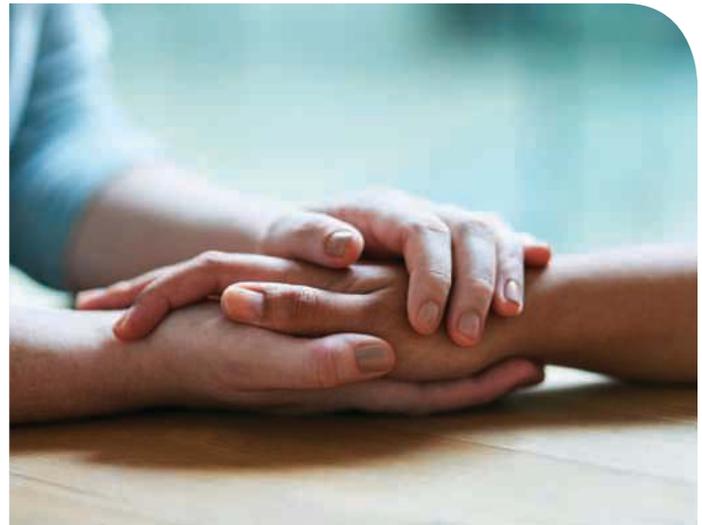
In addition to providing these services, CMC is also working with people who have been identified by their physician as high risk for cancer. Those patients are referred to our Community Health & Wellness programs, which include fitness and mindfulness classes, smoking cessation and weight loss programs, and health enrichment and holistic health programs.

Jean Aspinwall of Merrimack, a five-year breast cancer survivor, takes exercise classes with Demers and also had physical therapy through CMC's Outpatient Rehabilitation Services. She's worked through a host of medical issues and has seen tremendous benefit, both physical and emotional, from her ongoing classes. She believes others will experience the same – if not more – through the expanded BeWell program. "I cannot tell you how wonderful it is – the people, nurses, instructors. There's such joy. I have no problem now getting up in the morning and getting myself to the gym. It's the best thing I ever did."

Anyone receiving the support of the BeWell Cancer Survivorship Program will be able to pick the offerings that are right for them and can expect to receive encouragement along the way. Patients with a cancer diagnosis who are referred to BeWell receive these services free for three months.

"Treating a disease is just one component to being healthy," says CMC Manager of Community Outreach and Wellness Kim Kennedy, RN. "With the BeWell Cancer Survivorship Program, we are helping patients become survivors by helping the whole person become well."

"Words cannot describe how grateful I am," reflects Demers, who plans to keep working out. "A cancer diagnosis is not necessarily a death sentence. That's what I thought it was. I cannot count my blessings because there are so many." ■■



Lymphedema Support Group Offers Kinship and Care

The Lymphedema Support Group meets quarterly at Catholic Medical Center's Breast Care Center in Bedford as a resource for patients, caregivers and others learning to manage lymphatic issues. Lymphedema is the abnormal accumulation of lymphatic fluid, which can cause discomfort or pain, difficulty moving, and other symptoms. It is frequently associated with cancer but can also occur in people with chronic wounds, obesity, and a host of other conditions.

"Currently there is no cure for Lymphedema, which means learning how to manage it through nutrition, exercise, specialized massage techniques, use of compression and other methods is extremely important," says Rebecca Hecox, PT, CDT-Lana, WCC, who runs the Lymphedema Support group. "Lymphedema is a fairly misunderstood condition so our group looks to empower, inspire and assist the needs of those affected by it."

For additional information, contact Rebecca Hecox at 603.641.6700 or rhecox@cmc-nh.org.