



Memorial Sloan-Kettering  
Cancer Center

# Community M A T T E R S

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NEWS FROM MEMORIAL SLOAN-KETTERING CANCER CENTER

## Resources

### Blood/Platelet Donor Program

212-639-7643

### Community Matters

212-639-3199

### Making an Appointment

800-525-2225

## Common Signs of Emotional Stress in Cancer Patients

Patients experiencing these signs of stress, or family members and friends who observe these signs, are encouraged to request a consultation at the Counseling Center.

- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Panic attacks
- Anger
- Irritability
- Hopelessness
- A change in eating or sleeping habits
- Fatigue

## Addressing Cancer's Emotional Impact

While the physical toll cancer treatment can take on patients is often obvious and significant, the emotional impact of the disease can be less apparent and not as easily understood. Sadness, fear, grief, and isolation are just a few of the emotional stressors that cancer patients and their families may face during treatment and long after treatment has ended. "It takes courage for a person to admit that he has a problem and to seek help. Just as cancer requires a treatment team, coping with emotional challenges does as well," says Paul Edelman, a survivor of Hodgkin lymphoma.

Memorial Sloan-Kettering's Counseling Center is devoted to providing psychological care for cancer patients, offering training to health professionals, and conducting research into the complex range of psychological issues experienced by patients and their families. Approximately 2,500 new patients are seen annually at the Counseling Center, out of the 10,000 counseling sessions for patients, couples, and families that take place each year. The Counseling Center welcomes all cancer patients — whether or not they are receiving care at Memorial Sloan-Kettering — and offers counseling that helps patients gain perspective on their illness.

A staff of 36 psychiatrists and psychologists at the Counseling Center offers treatment and counseling for depression, anxiety, distress, fatigue, pain, insomnia, and appetite and weight loss. "We work with patients and their families in individual, couple, family or group therapy sessions to relieve emotional stress and pain that they may be experiencing," says Dr. William Breitbart, Chief of Psychiatry at the Counseling Center. "To help patients access care in the community, we maintain an extensive referral list of providers trained in counseling for cancer patients."

The Counseling Center, located at 641 Lex-



*Dr. William Breitbart (left) and other experts in our Counseling Center specialize in helping patients with cancer-related distress.*

ington Avenue at East 54th Street, is an outpatient facility of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. The first of its kind, the department was a pioneer in providing psychiatric services at a cancer hospital, and is currently the largest national resource for training and research in psychiatric oncology, in addition to being one of several sites for training in the psychological aspects of AIDS. Several specialized programs offered at the Counseling Center include services to help individuals stop smoking, manage aging and illness, cope with sexual dysfunction, and handle grief over the death of a loved one.

Mr. Edelman concludes "I know that with the help of my psychologist, I will continue to work through my challenges and move forward. There has been no shame, no stigma, and no judgment and I wish that everyone could have the opportunity to speak with someone like her. Just as my treatment required so much help beyond what I would have been able to accomplish on my own, my emotional survival has been no different."

For more information about the Counseling Center, please call 646-888-0100. Those interested in the Tobacco Cessation Program should call 212-610-0507. ☼

# Therapy through the Art of Ballet

Therapy to strengthen the body and raise the spirit comes in many forms. This fall, a group of approximately 20 cancer survivors, with an average age of 60, took to the ballet studio in pursuit of physical training and fun. The experience was made possible through a partnership between Memorial Sloan-Kettering's Resources for Life After Cancer (RLAC) and the American Ballet Theater to offer a series of ballet classes designed to help cancer survivors.

Penny Damaskos, RLAC Program Coordinator, comments that "the staff at ABT were amazing — very sensitive and caring — and everyone loved the program." The ballet classes provided strengthening exercises designed to build

core body muscles and improve physical endurance and balance for participants at all levels. Cancer patients were advised to speak to their healthcare provider prior to starting the exercise regimen to confirm that they could safely partake in the class. Class participant Claire says, "I enjoyed the classes immensely. For one and a half hours, I would be transported back to Carnegie Hall when, as a ten and eleven year old, I took classes and imagined myself up on the stage with the greats. Thank you for the opportunity to be re-introduced to a former passion." For more information about support programs offered through Resources for Life After Cancer, contact 646-888-4740. ☼

## Construction Updates

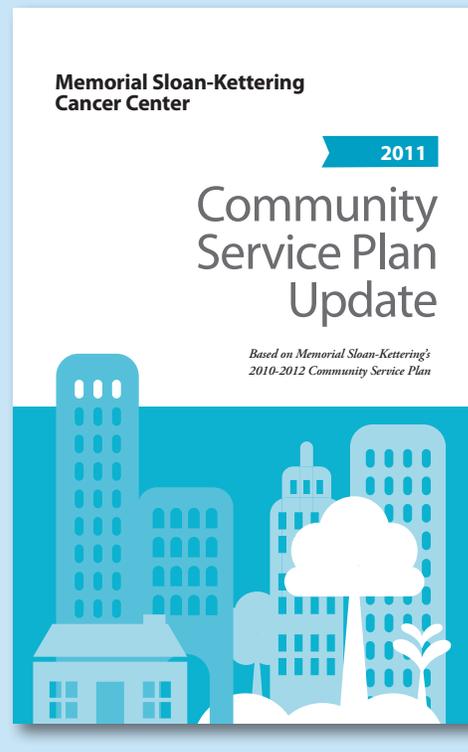
Construction at the Phase II site of the Zuckerman Research Center on East 68th Street between York and First Avenues is progressing well. Preparation of space within the facility for the Gerstner Sloan-Kettering Graduate School, Computational Biology Program, and academic offices is nearly complete and targeted for occupancy in the first quarter of 2012. The main lobby and auditorium are expected to open in the summer of 2012. Progress to complete the two-story

vivarium and Cell Engineering Facility will continue through 2013.

On East 67th Street between York and First Avenues, Memorial Sloan-Kettering is adding a level to its 425 East 67th Street facility that will contain a new, expanded pharmacy. The building's structural columns have been reinforced, and steel erection began in late August. We project completing construction of the pharmacy by the fall of 2012. ☼

## 2011 Community Service Plan Update Available

Memorial Sloan-Kettering's 2011 Community Service Plan Update provides information about our community outreach programs, services, and activities. To view the update online visit [www.mskcc.org/communityserviceplans](http://www.mskcc.org/communityserviceplans); to request a copy by mail or to comment on the report call 212-639-3199 or e-mail [communityaffairs@mskcc.org](mailto:communityaffairs@mskcc.org).



Memorial Sloan-Kettering wishes you a healthy and joyous holiday season.

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