



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

### Construction Information

212-639-4444

### To Make an Appointment

800-525-2225

## Casting a Wide Safety Net

In New York City, 35 percent of the population is foreign born and more than half of these individuals are from minority groups. Providing quality healthcare for this population is a challenging goal, in particular when it comes to cancer care. Immigrants and minorities have disproportionately higher rates of many types of cancer as well as lower survival rates than people from other groups, and often experience difficulty in accessing effective treatments and support services.



Staff from the Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service met this fall with a visiting delegation from Syria to share strategies on helping Arab women access cancer care. Members of the delegation from Damascus seen here with IHCD staff are (second from left) Rima Al Jaber, oncologist at Al-Beirouni Hospital for Cancer, and (second from right) Camille Amirza, obstetrician-gynecologist and laparoscopy specialist at the French Hospital.

These are serious concerns that Francesca Gany, Chief of the Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service (IHCD), strives to address. Dr. Gany came to Memorial Sloan-Kettering in 2011 to lead the IHCD, which works to identify the causes of health disparities in immigrant and minority populations, and to develop effective ways to remove cultural, economic, linguistic, and other barriers to culturally sensitive healthcare. “The widespread impact of the Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service results from the passion and dedication of a multilingual team that goes into the community when and where needed to make a difference,” said Dr. Gany.

For example, to assist pa-

tients in accessing and completing care, the IHCD operates the Integrated Cancer Care Access Network, which enables more than 800 patients a year at 12 New York City hospitals to receive case management support. These patients receive help with transportation, translation and interpretation, insurance, legal and financial resources, and food, as many low-income patients are forced to skip a meal in order to pay for their care or transportation needs. In response to patient food needs, the IHCD created the Food to Overcome Outcomes Disparities program and has opened five medically tailored food pantries in hospitals throughout New York City.

*Continued*

## Plans to Develop New Complex on the Upper East Side Announced



Architectural rendering of proposed building on 74th Street along the FDR Drive.

At a press conference in September, New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Memorial Sloan-Kettering President and CEO Craig B. Thompson, The City University of New York Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning, Construction, and Management Iris Weinschall, and Hunter College President Jennifer Raab announced plans to jointly build two separate facilities: a 750,000-square-foot outpatient cancer treatment facility for Memorial Sloan-Kettering patients and a new 336,000-square-foot Science and Health Professions building for Hunter College.

Current plans for the Memorial Sloan-

*Continued*

## Community Input Needed

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center is conducting a community health needs assessment in 2013 and we need your help. In order to identify cancer-related health needs that the community would like to see addressed in 2013 through 2015, we invite community members to complete our online survey at [www.mskcc.org/survey](http://www.mskcc.org/survey) by February 28, 2013. ✨

## Casting a Wide Safety Net *Continued*

Another fundamental barrier to care is language. Approximately 25 percent of New York City residents have limited English proficiency. This makes it challenging for them to understand health information, answer questions from doctors and nurses, give consent for procedures, and follow treatment instructions given in English. Among immigrant cancer patients in local hospitals, the IHCD has found that as many as 16 percent do not know what type of cancer they have, even months into treatment. The IHCD operates the Language and Cultural Responsiveness Program to help medical providers communicate more effectively with their patients.

The IHCD's Arab American Breast

Cancer Education and Referral Program (AMBER) provides bilingual breast health education to patients, patient navigation services, and cultural responsiveness training to hospitals with significant Arab American patient populations. The renown of this program stretches internationally, prompting Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt, to collaborate with AMBER to conduct a needs assessment of its breast cancer patients and to develop interventions in response. In 2013, AMBER will launch a colorectal cancer outreach campaign aimed at women and men in response to community interest in this service.

To reach other underserved populations, the IHCD collaborates with the Mexican

Consulate, for example, to provide health services, screening, and education to Mexican immigrants, a population at higher risk for many diseases, including cervical cancer. The South Asian Health Initiative focuses on oral cancer due to the prevalence of smokeless tobacco use among South Asians.

For more details on the programs mentioned here, visit [www.mskcc.org/cih](http://www.mskcc.org/cih). Immigrants and limited English proficient patients with cancer who are in need of direct services and assistance can call the Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service at 646-888-4600. The service also welcomes volunteers with multilingual skills who are interested in public health. ☼

## New Complex on the Upper East Side *Continued*

Kettering site are to provide leading-edge care for patients with lung, head and neck, and hematologic cancers, as well as a state-of-the-art outpatient bone marrow transplantation program and other services. "This new facility and its close proximity to our main hospital will play a critically important role in our mission to bring novel and more-effective treatments to patients with cancer," Dr. Thompson said. "It will have a patient-oriented physical design and will incorporate the most-advanced technology to make our patients' visits pleasant and fast, so we can get them back to their normal lives as

soon as possible."

Hunter College will create consolidated science and nursing facilities on its portion of the site. "When the college's premier nursing and physical therapy programs move into this state-of-the-art space, its researchers and students will have labs appropriate for their groundbreaking work," said CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. The property, located on East 73rd and East 74th Streets along the FDR Drive, is pending regulatory approval, and the public input and approval process is expected to extend through 2013. ☼

**Go Green!** Memorial Sloan-Kettering grows greener every day. Help us to reduce paper waste by signing up to receive *Community Matters* via e-mail. Please send your e-mail address to [communityaffairs@mskcc.org](mailto:communityaffairs@mskcc.org) with a request for the online version of this quarterly newsletter.

### FREE LECTURES FOR CANCER SURVIVORS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2013  
**Weight Matters: Dietary  
Modification and Behavioral  
Change**

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2013  
**Managing Employment Issues  
after Cancer**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2013  
**Finding Our Way: A Discussion  
of Spirituality and Survivorship**

All workshops will take place from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. To register and for information on meeting location, please call 646-888-4740 or e-mail [rlac@mskcc.org](mailto:rlac@mskcc.org). ☼

Please join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/sloankettering](http://www.facebook.com/sloankettering).

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www.mskcc.org  
1275 York Avenue • New York, NY 10065  
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