

# Cancer Care Improvements Allowing St. Charles County Patients to Continue Normal Lives as "Survivors"



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from breast cancer is now only 1 in 35. And the five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with localized cervical cancer is 92%.

Here at Missouri Cancer Care, we like to focus on "survivorship." While patients coming in with a fresh diagnosis are usually worried about what to expect, we walk them through the treatment process and assure them that, in most cases, the odds are in their favor.

Patients who live in St. Charles and Lincoln Counties are especially blessed to be living in an area that is exploding with technological advances. Currently, there are four Missouri Cancer Care locations to provide them with state-of-the-art radiation therapy and chemotherapy treatments close to home.

My hope is that we continue to look for new ways of bringing treatments to our patients rather than having them reorganize their lives and travel further away from home. My patients are always relieved when they hear they don't have to travel out of the community to receive the best treatments in cancer. We can say with confidence that St. Charles County has the latest technological advances, participates in clinical trials and is improving the lives of people living with cancer.

Since more patients are surviving cancer, it has become very important to minimize long term side effects of treatments to improve quality of life. It takes teamwork and utilization of several resources to achieve this.

This fall, those resources will be combining with an even greater asset to form an impressive one-of-a-kind cancer facility. In the first collaboration of its kind, Missouri Cancer Care is working with SSM St. Joseph Hospital West and St. Louis University Hospital to operate an H.W. Koenig Cancer Center together. The center is currently being built on the campus of St. Joseph Hospital West, directly on the North Shore of Lake Saint Louis. The building and surrounding gardens are being designed as a "healing environment," not only to take advantage of the relaxing, scenic views outside, but also to promote what will be happening within.

Missouri Cancer Care's Wentzville practice will be relocating to the new facility and will offer the latest forms of chemotherapy and radiation therapy. SSM St. Joseph will operate a Women's Breast and Imaging Center, a cancer information center and a community education center, in addition to housing a state-of-the-art surgery center right across the street. St. Louis University will operate the CyberKnife

Stereotactic Radiosurgery System, one of the most sophisticated forms of non-invasive radiosurgery available.

Stereotactic radiosurgery is a non-surgical treatment in which high doses of focused radiation beams are delivered from multiple locations to destroy tumor cells and stop the growth of active cells. The CyberKnife system uses a robotic arm and image-guided cameras to locate the position of the tumor, then treat it with multiple beams of radiation. Because of the flexibility of the robotic arm, the system is able to reach areas of the body that are unreachable by other treatment methods. Thus, cancers that were previously considered "inoperable" are now able to be treated.

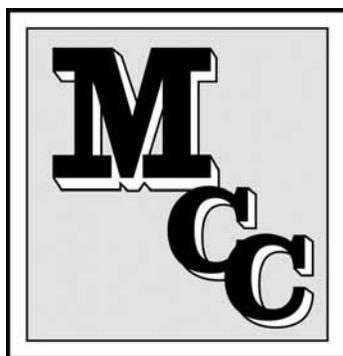
The CyberKnife offers accurate precision within sub-millimeter distances and spares healthy tissue surrounding the targeted area. This helps to ease many of the side effects of traditional radiation, such as fatigue, swelling and hair loss. In addition, because it is not really surgery, the CyberKnife does not present the same problems as traditional surgery. There is no anesthesia or anesthesia after-effects, and the risk of infection and hemorrhaging is minimized.

This technology will be an enormous boon to patients with cancer from all over the area. There are currently only 20 CyberKnife systems in the United States, and this will be one of only two in Missouri. Since most cancer treatments are now primarily on an outpatient basis, the convenience of having the CyberKnife and such a comprehensive facility close to home will allow many patients to continue a more "normal" life throughout their treatment.

As an oncologist, I understand that patients with cancer have kids, careers and hobbies...and they can't put their lives on "hold" because of cancer. Our plan is to make it easier for you to continue your plans. Life does go on after a cancer diagnosis.

And thanks to our growth-minded community, it is easier than ever to become a "survivor" with very few interruptions.

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