

# Quality Report Card



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CANCER CARE

## Cancer Survivorship

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be an overwhelming experience, often accompanied by feelings of fear, anxiety, and sadness. Patients are naturally worried about the logistics of their care, such as treatment protocols, physical side effects, and the emotional toll that the disease will have on them and their loved ones. Although an individual's cancer journey begins with a diagnosis, it does not end with the final treatment; cancer survivorship is the entire experience of living with, through, and beyond a cancer diagnosis.

Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) is committed to assisting patients from the beginning of diagnosis and continuing throughout their life, focusing on physical, emotional, social, and financial well-being for patients and their families, as well as helping to manage treatment effects and promoting long-term health with specialized care and support that bridges the gap between active treatment and a thriving life in survivorship.

The Oncology Navigation Team at LMH consists of highly trained individuals serving as advocates and educators who guide patients through their cancer journey. This includes an oncology dietitian, case manager, oral treatment navigator, genetics navigator, and oncology navigator. A lung cancer navigator and a breast cancer navigator are also available for patients diagnosed with these specific cancers. The Navigation Team assists patients with understanding their treatment options and works closely with physicians, therapists, financial assistance advisors, and all other members of the care team to

ensure that patients receive the best care for their cancer diagnosis.

Breast cancer patients who have completed treatment with curative intent are eligible to participate in LMH's Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program (FVRx). The program is a healthy eating initiative that supports patients and their families in their efforts to maintain a balanced diet by offering a prescription for free fruits and vegetables, as well as support from a registered dietitian. Patients may pick up a free fruit and vegetable basket once per week in the Main Street Café at LMH using their FVRx participant identification card. In addition, participants may use their ID card to shop at the Canal Market District Farmer's Market in Downtown Newark from May through October.

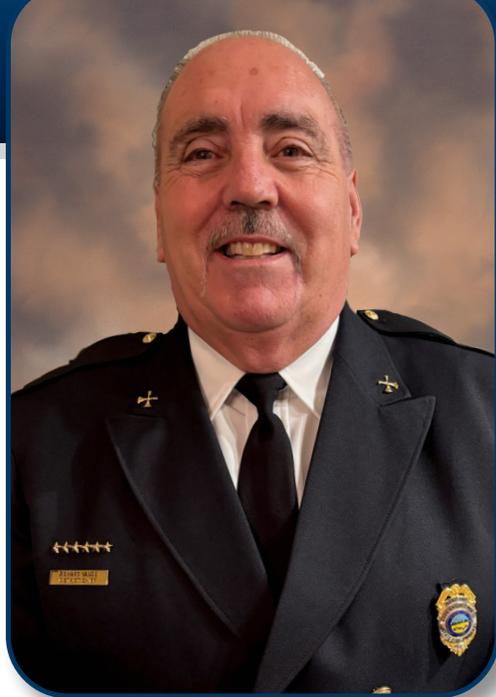
LMH also holds a monthly Cancer Support Group and Caregivers Support Group. These meetings occur on the fourth Tuesday of each month and are free and open to all individuals with cancer, their caregivers, and those who have lost loved ones, regardless of where treatment is administered. Facilitated by the LMH Oncology staff, the group offers encouragement, education, and an opportunity for participant discussion. A healthy food option, selected by the Oncology Dietitian, is served at the meeting. Individuals can register by calling (220) 564-1890.

Participants of the Cancer Support Group are also invited to visit the "Seeds of Hope Garden," an area where cancer patients, survivors, and caretakers can visit for

respite. The "Seeds of Hope Garden" is located within the one-acre vegetable and flower mini-farm on Dickerson Street, which is maintained by the Culinary Services Department. Visiting the garden offers the group members an opportunity for activity through gardening and access to fresh produce. Visitors are encouraged to take home anything that they harvest.

In celebration of cancer survivors and their families, LMH hosts a Cancer Survivors Picnic each summer. Participants unite to demonstrate that life after a cancer diagnosis remains meaningful and productive. During the event, attendees receive welcome gifts, play games, and are offered health information and community resources available to cancer survivors. A healthy meal is catered by LMH Culinary Services, and participants have an opportunity to reunite with their care team. The event coincides with National Cancer Survivors Day, an annual celebration of life held in hundreds of communities throughout the United States.

Individuals who are diagnosed with cancer are not alone in their fight. From diagnosis to treatment to survivorship and beyond, LMH offers comprehensive and compassionate care that addresses the physical, emotional, social, and financial needs of patients and their families.



## Patient Story – Richard “Rich” Vance

Having served over 42 years in fire and emergency services, Richard “Rich” Vance understands the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle including regular visits with a primary care physician. It was during one of his annual physicals over six years ago that the first signs of cancer were detected. Garth A. Bennington, M.D., Rich’s primary care physician, had concerns about an abnormality on a chest X-ray. He recommended that Rich have further testing to determine the exact nature of the abnormality. The following year, the spot remained, and Dr. Bennington referred Rich to Licking Memorial Hematology/Oncology.

“Dr. Bennington has been very kind to me and understanding throughout the years that I have visited him. He has always explained things to me with patience and compassion,” Rich shared. “I was grateful for his concern and care, and I trusted that he had my best interests at heart.”

After more scans and a biopsy, Aruna C. Gowda, M.D., confirmed to Rich that he had lymphoma, a type of cancer that affects the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system is part of the body’s immune system and is made up of organs, glands, vessels, and clusters of cells called lymph nodes. Lymphoma can affect lymph nodes, blood, bone marrow, spleen, and other tissues throughout the body, such as in the gastrointestinal system, central nervous system, bones, or skin. Dr. Gowda assured Rich that lymphoma is treatable and that the cancer was in the early stages. At the time, she

explained the best course of action was to watch and wait. If the cancer does not cause symptoms, there is no need for treatment right away. Instead, Rich would have regular checkups to monitor the condition and determine if the cancer would grow and spread.

In the fall of 2024, Rich began experiencing swelling in his neck. He visited Dr. Bennington with the belief that he was suffering from an infection and needed an antibiotic to cure the issue. Dr. Bennington quickly determined that the swelling was not an infection and referred Rich to Dr. Gowda once again.

“After years of praying for the best, my family and I were now facing the reality of my cancer diagnosis. Now that the lymphoma had presented itself, Dr. Gowda explained the next steps,” Rich said. “She recommended an aggressive treatment plan and assured me that she and her staff would be sensitive to my needs and respond appropriately if the treatment became overwhelming.”

“I cannot say enough good things about Dr. Gowda and the staff at the Oncology Clinic. They are truly rock stars,” Rich enthused. “They are honest and open and treat everyone like members of their own family. Dr. Gowda asked me if I wanted a referral to one of the hospitals in Columbus, and I told her absolutely not. I felt comfortable and welcomed by everyone at Licking Memorial Hospital, from the senior leadership to the Volunteers and everyone I had contact with, that I would not even consider going anywhere else for care.”

Rich is especially grateful for the privacy offered in the Oncology Clinic where he received his chemotherapy treatments. Each patient is given their own space to relax while the medications are administered. The process can take hours. Family members are encouraged to sit with the patient and every effort is made to ensure the comfort of both patient and

guests. During that time, staff members and Volunteers make regular visits to address needs such as warm blankets or snacks.

“My first treatment, I wanted to be strong and do my best to try to tolerate the medication,” Rich shared. “However, I started feeling warm and itchy. I tried not to make a fuss, but the staff kept asking me how I was feeling, and even Dr. Gowda stopped in the room to check on me. When they realized I was having a reaction to the treatment, they began readjusting the dosage right away. I felt so much better. They are such an amazing team.”

Every 21 days for 18 weeks, Rich visited the Clinic for his treatments. He enjoyed bringing small treats to the staff. He wanted to show them the kindness and care that they continually provided him. At the end of his treatment, Rich was able to ring the bell at the Oncology Clinic. Ringing the bell has become a tradition for cancer patients throughout the country to celebrate and signify the end of the work to battle their cancer. The staff members celebrated with him and his family by offering treats, cheers, and applause.

With the lymphoma in remission, Rich is looking forward to full retirement from his job at the State Fire Marshall’s office. He and his wife, Carolyn, celebrated 42 years of marriage, and they look forward to spending more time with their daughter, Alexis, son-in-law, Steve, and granddaughter, Makenna. Having experienced his own cancer journey, Rich says he has a new perspective on life. While the diagnosis, treatments, and other processes are frightening, Rich was grateful to be surrounded by the love and support of his family, and the compassionate people who are dedicated to treating patients with dignity and kindness.

# Cancer Care – How do we compare?

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

1. Statistics are collected for all screening mammograms to assess the accuracy of the testing. Some parameters that are determined include the probability that any individual case of breast cancer will be identified by the mammogram and the probability of the mammogram correctly identifying patients who do not have cancer.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Percentage of cancers correctly identified by the mammogram	94%	97%	91%	87% <sup>(1)</sup>
Percentage of patients without cancer correctly identified by the mammogram	92%	90%	92%	92% <sup>(1)</sup>

2. Screening mammograms are conducted to detect breast cancer before the patient has any noticeable symptoms. Breast cancer is most easily and effectively treated when it is diagnosed in its early stages. Although the results from most screening mammograms are negative, meaning no cancer was detected, for patients who are found to have breast cancer, the screening mammogram may have been life-saving technology. Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) tracks the number of screening mammograms that have positive interpretations, meaning that the tests detected cancer that may have remained unnoticed until it was more advanced.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Cancer detection rate with positive interpretations (per 1,000 screening mammograms)	7	6	5	5.8 <sup>(1)</sup>

3. Chemotherapy drugs are toxic and could be dangerous if not prepared correctly. Therefore, LMH follows a rigorous five-step safety procedure to prevent chemotherapy errors.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Number of chemotherapy medication errors negatively impacting patients	0	0	0	0

4. When a person is either diagnosed with or treated for cancer, the person is entered into the Cancer Registry. It then is the responsibility of the accredited organization to follow up with the person for the rest of his/her life on an annual basis to encourage appropriate care. Cancer Registry staff also may contact the primary care physician to ensure the health of the patient.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Cancer Registry patients with annual follow-up	94%	95%	95%	greater than 80%

5. Clinical research ensures that patient care approaches the highest possible level of quality. There is no minimum requirement for how many patients are placed in cancer-related clinical trials in a community hospital cancer program; however, to provide maximum service, LMH offers access to national clinical trials to patients as a member of the Columbus Community Clinical Oncology Program.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Newly diagnosed and/or treated patients in clinical trials	9%	22%	14%	greater than 2%

Cancer Care – How do we compare? (continued on back page)



Check out our Quality Report Cards online at [LMHealth.org](http://LMHealth.org).

**6.** In an effort to prevent and promote early detection and treatment of cancer, the physician offices of Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) measure and track results of cancer screening tests for breast cancer, cervical cancer, and colorectal cancer for all active patients. Active patient population is defined as patients seen within the last three years.

LMHP active patient population who received screening tests for:	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	LMHP Goal
Breast cancer (female patients, age 50 to 75)	75%	77%	76%	National <sup>(3)</sup> 69%
Colorectal cancer (all patients, age 45-75)	57%	61%	63%	National <sup>(3)</sup> 63%

**7.** Hereditary cancers, such as breast cancer, are caused in part by gene mutations passed from parents to children, and generally begin to develop in a person at a younger age. Through genetic testing, researchers can determine if someone carries a specific mutation that puts them and their family members at an increased risk and need for early screenings. LMH offers genetic testing to newly diagnosed patients with breast cancer who meet certain qualifications in order to equip them with the knowledge to make the best choices for themselves and their families.

Breast cancer diagnoses that met criteria and received genetic testing	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
	85%	92%	100%	90%

**Data Footnotes:**

- (1) Lee, C. I., Abraham, L., Miglioretti, D. L., Onega, T., Kerlikowske, K., Lee, J. M., Sprague, B. L., Tosteson, A. N. A., Rauscher, G.H., Bowles, E. J. A., diFlorio-Alexander, R. M., Henderson, L. M., & Breast Cancer Surveillance Consortium (2023). National Performance Benchmarks for Screening Digital Breast Tomosynthesis: Update from the Breast Cancer Surveillance Consortium. *Radiology*, 307(4), e222499. <https://doi.org/10.1148/radiol.222499>
- (2) National Quality Measures for Breast Cancer (NQMBC) Database, [www.nqmbc.org](http://www.nqmbc.org).
- (3) Percentages are compiled by averaging Commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid data.

# Finding Emotional Support during Treatment

Patients who have been diagnosed with cancer experience a wide range of emotions including fear, sadness, anxiety, anger, and loneliness. While these feelings are normal, it is important for patients to seek appropriate emotional support to help cope, reduce stress, and improve mental well-being. The following tips can help individuals find the assistance they need:

**Communication** – talking openly with the healthcare team by sharing feelings and concerns allows them to provide educational resources, counseling referrals, and other support services that are tailored to the patient’s needs.

**Lean on family and friends** – loved ones can help relieve the stress of everyday life by aiding with daily tasks, preparing meals, providing transportation, or attending medical appointments as a support person and advocate.

**Self-care** – practicing self-care and stress reduction techniques, such as mindfulness, meditation, and yoga can help manage emotions. Journaling thoughts and finding gratitude are also helpful ways to cope with stress and anxiety.

**Support groups** – attending support groups allows patients to connect with other individuals who share similar experiences and can reduce feelings of isolation.

**Professional help** – for individuals who experience persistent sadness, anxiety, or depression lasting longer than two weeks, consulting a mental health professional or counselor can often be helpful. They can provide talk therapy, cognitive behavioral techniques, and medication if necessary.

Please take a few minutes to read this month’s report on **Cancer Care**. You will soon discover why Licking Memorial Hospital is measurably different ... for your health! The Quality Report Card is a publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department. Please contact the Public Relations Department at (220) 564-1572 to receive future mailings.

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