

August 22, 2011

MONTEFIORE UPDATE

KEEPING ASSOCIATES IN THE KNOW

Innovative Care for Patients with Bone and Soft Tissue Tumors

Years ago, patients with osteosarcoma, a malignant tumor that develops in bones, often had to have an arm or leg amputated as part of their treatment. Now, thanks to chemotherapy and advances in surgical techniques, doctors can remove the cancer and save the patient's limb in most cases.

"We can remove a bone segment that's involved with some of the soft tissue surrounding the tumor. We can then reconstruct the limb using a variety of techniques to allow the patient an active lifestyle," says David S. Geller, MD, Director of the Sarcoma and Soft-Tissue Oncology Service at Montefiore, and Assistant Professor of Surgery at Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

"Dr. Geller is one of the country's few fellowship-trained orthopedic oncologists and is well-positioned to take on complex cases," says Steven K. Libutti, MD, Director of the Montefiore Einstein Center for Cancer Care. "This, coupled with the multidisciplinary approach of the Center for Cancer Care, which allows collaboration with experts in medical oncology and other disciplines, means that we have a winning combination and can achieve our overall goal of utilizing treatments that improve the patient's well-being, minimize toxicity, reduce recovery time, and produce successful outcomes."

Dr. Geller specializes in evaluating and treating patients with bone and soft tissue tumors, including bone and soft tissue metastases. These include sarcomas, relatively rare malignant tumors that develop from bone, muscle, cartilage, fat, and other types of connective tissue, and also benign types of tumors such as simple bone cysts, osteoid osteomas and chondroblastomas. Malignancies such as osteosarcoma require extensive surgeries to ensure the cancer has been completely removed. Limbs and affected joints can be reconstructed using a metal prosthesis, a bone graft from donor tissue, or a metal prosthesis combined with a bone graft. For young children, Dr. Geller and his team can ensure a child's continued growth by using a prosthesis that can expand as the child grows.

The Center for Cancer Care uses a multidisciplinary approach to support Dr. Geller in treating these uncommon and challenging tumors. In addition to surgical resection for patients with these tumors, the Center's Melanoma and Sarcoma Program provides patients access to advanced chemotherapy treatments. Petra Rietschel, MD, Attending Physician at Montefiore, and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Einstein, is a leader in researching molecular targets and identifying new drugs capable of attacking those targets. For unresectable tumors of the extremities, Katia Papalezova, MD, Surgical

Oncologist at Montefiore and Assistant Professor of Surgery at Einstein, is specially trained in isolated limb perfusion and isolated limb infusion, which can sometimes avoid the need for an amputation.

A multidisciplinary tumor board meets weekly to review cases. Dr. Geller's group includes oncologists, pediatric hematologists/oncologists, radiologists, pathologists, reconstructive surgeons and other specialists at Montefiore who provide patients with comprehensive individualized care. "It's very stressful for patients to learn they have cancer," he says. "Our goal is to guide patients through the complex process in a warm and caring manner, and provide them with all the resources, clinical experience and cutting-edge treatments necessary in the hope to cure them."

Dr. Geller is developing new computer-assisted navigation techniques, such as an intraoperative CT-guidance system for bone tumor surgery. These techniques improve surgical accuracy, allow for less invasive operations and promote healing. "We hope to shape how this technology is incorporated in orthopedic oncology in the near future," says Dr. Geller.

For more information or to refer patients to the Sarcoma and Soft-Tissue Oncology Service, call 718-920-5722.

Do You Speak My Language?

Sueheylee Rosa-Rivera, a customer service liaison at CMO, Montefiore Care Management, recently put her language skills to the test. Along with 20 other associates, she participated in and graduated from Montefiore's new—and challenging—Medical Interpreting Certification Program.

"We learned hundreds of words in our target language, we learned where and how to stand as interpreters and we learned how to introduce ourselves to patients and the medical professionals," says Ms. Rosa-Rivera, who speaks English and Spanish and will now interpret for Spanish-speaking patients in her department when needed.

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In addition to studying medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, students performed role-playing exercises and took a final exam, which, impressively, all 21 passed. As graduates, they are eligible to take the national board exam to become certified medical interpreters.

The Bronx is among the most diverse counties in the United States, and the interpreter program is just one of several new initiatives at Montefiore designed to increase cultural awareness. "More than a 100 languages are spoken in the Bronx," says Leslie Bank, Director of the Customer Service Department. "By taking this intensive, rigorous training program, associates can help patients understand and communicate effectively. Every patient has the right to participate in their healthcare."

The Customer Service Department already provides patients with by-phone or in-person foreign language and sign language interpreting services. One of the goals of the new program is to increase the number of staff members who can interpret for patients face-to-face.

Events

Movie of the Month: Misunderstood Minds **Friday, August 26 | 10:00 am–noon** **The Suzanne Pincus Family Learning Place** **The Children's Hospital at Montefiore**

This 90-minute production follows five families who have children struggling with learning difficulties. For more information, call The Family Learning Place at 718-741-2357.

Professional Development **Monday, September 12** **Thursday, September 15** **Monday, September 19** **Monday, September 26** **5:15–7:15 pm** **Yonkers**

The Corporate Division of Human Resources offers a four-day Professional Development Seminar to all associates. Learn the skills and tools necessary for personal success. The following topics will be covered: self/skills assessment; developing an effective resume; interviewing techniques and preparation; and better management of your current position. Associates who complete all four sessions receive a certificate. Register by obtaining an application form from Human Resources at

3411 Wayne Avenue, 1st floor, or call 718-920-8440. All applications must be submitted no later than Friday, September 2. There is no fee, but space is limited.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Conference **Friday, September 16 | 8:30 am–noon** **Tappan Hill, Tarrytown**

This free conference is for pediatricians, obstetricians, family practitioners and their staff. Topics include lead poisoning basics, lead and pregnancy, Local Law 1, and a special report on epigenetics. Registration is required. For more information, call Dana Politis at 718-547-2789 ext. 216. A similar conference will be held in Cherkasky Auditorium, Moses Division, on Wednesday, October 19.

The Kurt Elias Psycho-Oncology Memorial Lectureship **Friday, September 16 | noon–2:00 pm** **Cherkasky Auditorium, Moses Division**

The lecture, to be given by Jimmie C. Holland, MD, the Wayne E. Chapman Chair in Psychiatric Oncology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, is titled "Bringing

For Ms. Rosa-Rivera, the hard work has paid off, and she feels a deep sense of accomplishment. "I enjoy helping others and I try to see things the other way around," she says, explaining why she signed up. "If it were me and I didn't understand what the doctor is saying, how would I feel? It's unimaginable."

Wanted: Students for Interpreter Program

The 56-hour program is open to associates who are fluent in both English and another language (including sign language), and have approval from their managers. Associates can choose to take classes on seven consecutive Saturdays or on alternate Tuesday and Thursday evenings. No prior qualifications are needed, but associates are required to pass two language-proficiency entrance exams—one in English and another in their target language. The next semester starts in mid-September. There is no cost to the student. To learn more or to request an application form, call the Customer Service Department at 718-920-4943.

Science to Care of the Whole Patient: A History of Psycho-Oncology." Lunch will be served and each participant will receive an autographed copy of Dr. Holland's book: The Human Side of Cancer. AMA PRA Category 1 CME Credits will be issued by Albert Einstein College of Medicine. For more information, contact Nada Piacentino at 718-920-6674 or npiacent@montefiore.org.

Summer Concert Series

Thursday, August 25 | 12:30–1:30 pm **Moses Division, West Garden**

Gabriel Ayala, an award-winning international recording artist and classically trained guitarist, will perform. For more information and details of other upcoming concerts, email Jon Matthias at jomatti@montefiore.org. The summer concert series is presented by the Engineering Department and Montefiore's Healing Arts Program.

Published by the Department of Marketing and Communications. Please share story ideas with: James Fergusson, Editor, jferguss@montefiore.org / 718-920-2317. Update is produced for Montefiore associates to keep them up-to-date with Montefiore news, events, clinical innovations, research and recognitions.