Our commitment to cancer treatment and prevention has never been stronger.
Your Best Option – Right Here in Reno

Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer has the expert staff and physicians, technology and resources right here at the place you call home. And for 104 years, we’ve set the standard for health care delivery in northern Nevada.

Since the start of our cancer program in 2005, our teams have surpassed national expectations and proven their ability to offer effective treatment programs and outcomes for patients. Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer is an American College of Surgeons accredited with commendation program, was the first in Nevada to be named an Accredited Breast Center and Imaging Breast Center of Excellence and one of only two nationally to be recognized as a Lymphedema Treatment Center.

National recognition illustrates Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer as a comprehensive, multidisciplinary program that has the expertise, technology and resources for local patients. These acknowledgements showcase the staying power of our program and our ability to emerge as the region’s leader in cancer care.

In addition to our commitment to quality standards, our philosophy of healing our patients in a compassionate environment remains strong. There is great potential in our future – and since our transition to Prime Healthcare Services, we are stronger and have a renewed sense of our mission – providing quality health care in a convenient, compassionate and cost-effective manner.

Helen Lidholm
With You Every Step of the Way

At Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer we are focused on survivorship and leading our patients on their journey of healing.

Our collaborative minds become the catalyst for our patients to receive superior clinical outcomes, and we stop at nothing to make sure they have the best resources right here at home.

Every day, the compassion and dedication of our staff and physicians make a difference in the lives of those with cancer. We couldn’t be prouder to have a team that strives for the same mission…exceeding expectations and surpassing national standards.

Because of this dedication, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer was the first program in the state of Nevada to receive National Breast Accreditation and since its first days as a cancer program has maintained national accreditation with commendation from the American College of Surgeons. National accreditation has proven our ability to evolve our programs and set the bar for local cancer care.

As a leading cancer center, we know the importance of offering a range of state-of-the-art technologies and programs for our patients. To a patient, never leaving home can mean the world of a difference to their long-term health, and we are dedicated to offering high-quality care right here in northern Nevada.

We stand behind you on your journey because our commitment to fighting cancer has become stronger, our dedication more visible, and the compassion we have for survivorship is greater than ever.
The success of Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer depends on the perfect blend of big-picture vision and keen attention to detail. The combination of these two skills ensures each patient receives excellent care at every stage and from every angle.

**The healing hands inside Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer always put the patient and their best interests first.**

With a patient-centered focus on both acute and outpatient services, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer offers a comprehensive array of programs, each designed to promote the best all-around outcomes for every patient.

These optimal outcomes have much to do with the fact that Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer provides access to the most advanced procedures and state-of-the-art technology.

Even more important may be the fact that the healing hands inside Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer always put the patient and their best interests first.

“Rarely does a day go by when a patient does not tell me we have the most wonderful, caring people, who turn a very scary situation into something they can better cope with on a day-to-day basis,” says Jonathan Tay, MD, medical director of radiation oncology.

Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer has long been a place where caring is simply part of the culture. Here, patients receive high-level care throughout the treatment process and well into survivorship.
Supporting Our Patients’ Goals & Vision

**Spiritual Care**

Spiritual care is part of our culture. At Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, patients have access to care for mind, body and soul. For cancer patients and family members of every faith, getting the appropriate spiritual support can have a major impact on all-around health. Through Saint Mary’s Spiritual Services, Catholic chaplains and volunteers are available to minister to patients and family members of any religion or belief system. This spiritual support comes in many forms, from working to alleviate anxiety to helping cancer patients and their loved ones make peace with what’s happening. And in 2012, dedicated Fellow in Oncology Tim Peters enhanced the cancer program at Saint Mary’s, so cancer patients have ready access to spiritual care, which can be integral to survivorship. The Cancer Center continues to integrate spiritual care as part of a patient’s comprehensive treatment plan.

**Palliative Care**

For those patients who are receiving treatment and need additional support, palliative care may be the answer. This program focuses on the psychosocial and spiritual aspects of care as well as symptom management and therapy. “We focus on improving quality of life and supporting our patients while they receive care,” said Hospice & Palliative Care nurse Sister Cyndie Cammack, OP, RN, MSN. Palliative care offer guidance regarding illness and treatment; advanced-care planning; symptom management; and support for all aspects of a patient’s illness.

**Hospice**

Saint Mary’s Hospice assists cancer patients who need spiritual guidance and symptom management in their final days. The hospice program is designed to provide patients with comfort and support while encouraging open communication. Even in the wake of a life-threatening illness, Saint Mary’s Hospice surrounds patients with compassion and becomes the core that brings families together during a patient’s final days. “Hospice patients either no longer want aggressive treatment or they have run the course of treatments available,” says Cammack, “Our program supports these patients as they prepare for the end of life.”

**A Time To Heal**

Amid a flurry of treatments and changes, patients may be too busy to process the feelings that often follow a diagnosis of cancer. To help patients address these emotions, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer offers research-based patient support groups and programs.

A Time to Heal is one of these programs, designed for breast cancer patients who have completed treatment and are making the transition to the next phase of survivorship. Research and experience show that A Time to Heal boosts well-being among cancer survivors. “A Time to Heal aims to improve quality of life for breast cancer patients,” says Dolores Cooler, licensed social worker and program facilitator.

“This 12-week program offers the tools, information, support and time for them to focus on themselves and take charge of their lives.” Each three-hour session begins with gentle stretching to promote arm mobility and healthy posture, followed by a research-based presentation, and the sharing of input and experiences. “Patients are able to be with other survivors and share their stories,” Cooler says, “while being given the information, guidance and support that encourages resilience.” As the program states, participating in A Time to Heal may help you to not only survive, but to thrive after cancer treatment.

“A Time To Heal” - A Focused Survivorship Program for Women Who Have Undergone Treatment for Breast Cancer - Principal Investigator, Patty Sredy, RN, BSN
Nurse Navigators: Focused on the Cancer Journey and Survivorship

Dealing with a cancer diagnosis can be confusing and overwhelming. The priority of the Nurse Navigation program at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer is to ensure newly diagnosed patients understand their treatment program and have support resources at their fingertips. Every day can present new challenges for cancer patients, but the nurse navigators at Saint Mary’s assist patients with their onward cancer journey and teach survival skills.

“A nurse navigator guides patients through their care, starting from diagnosis by supporting the patients with education, symptom management and addressing barriers that may delay or prohibit treatment. The navigator makes sure they have appropriate follow-up care after treatment is completed,” says Laura Harsh, APN NP-C OCN, who serves as nurse navigator for all types of cancers seen in the outpatient infusion center.

“For my job, this means helping patients understand the potential side effects they might experience from chemotherapy and acting as another resource for any questions or concerns,” Harsh adds. “They always have our one-call cancer line for questions or support.”

The nurse navigators at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer have extensive experience in oncology care. They are trained to help patients and family members comprehend the complexities of the health care system, provide education about disease treatment and survival strategies.

**Patients deserve unwavering support from experienced medical professionals, who stand ready and willing to answer every question.**

Beyond their work at the Center for Cancer, the navigator team dedicates their time to community outreach by providing hands on learning opportunities. “We have what we like to call a traveling road show to demonstrate to the community what cancer looks and feels like. This brings greater awareness to the disease and encourages patients to receive regular screenings and be mindful of prevention methods,” says Harsh.

“We identify and address any barriers that may delay or prevent treatment and can assist in facilitating communication between the family and the patient—it is important that things are said and wishes are known,” says Suzi Puryear, RN, BSN, WCN, gastrointestinal/thoracic nurse navigator at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer.

“We make sure patients receive the support they need.”

“The Nurse Navigator program allows patients to have one central point of contact to collaborate with the entire cancer team. This is what makes our program unique, the personal touch and our unwavering compassion.” says Laurie Schirling, RN, OCN, who serves as the breast nurse navigator for Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer.

This one-on-one support extends beyond diagnosis and treatment, as the nurse navigators also provide tools for cancer patients entering the next phase: survivorship. When treatment is completed, the nurse navigators develop a survivorship care plan for cancer patients so they are informed, educated and supported on their journey forward.

“Surveillance of the cancer is a key issue once treatment is completed and therefore the survivorship care plans also includes the national guidelines for surveillance,” Puryear says. “It provides clear defined steps to guide post-treatment care.”

One-Call Cancer Line 775-770-7414
Advanced Programs Mean Better Patient Outcomes

Designing a program to fit our patients’ needs and support levels

With cancer, there is no standard solution, no one-size-fits-all answer, as no two patients are ever the same. The experts at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer recognize and honor this fact, developing treatment, support and survivorship plans personal to each patient.

Radiation Oncology

Radiation therapy is one of the main weapons in the war on cancer, and the goal of the radiation oncology department is to provide every patient with the most effective radiation plan possible. To achieve this goal, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer has developed a sophisticated radiation oncology department, with access to state-of-the-art technology and equipment. “This large toolbox allows us to tailor individual patient radiotherapy, and it often gives patients choices in their treatments,” says Jonathan Tay, MD, medical director of radiation oncology.

At Saint Mary’s, each treatment plan is designed around the patient as a whole person, based on up-to-the-minute images of the cancer site and guided by input from experts across the spectrum of care. “We have weekly multi-modality tumor boards, where we discuss treatment recommendations for patients,” says radiation oncologist Jaime Shuff, MD. “We also have social workers, nurses, nurse navigators and radiation therapists, all of whom are involved in the care of our patients.”

From radiation to cancer rehabilitation, patients at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer receive tailor-made care every step of the way — all in one location, right here close to home.

We are successful because of the tremendous coordination of care from our staff.

According to radiation oncologist Katie Legarza, MD, it’s this combined effort that allows the radiation oncology department to offer such personal care for every cancer patient. “Our radiation therapy department, which has state-of-the-art equipment, is successful because of the tremendous coordination of care from our staff,” Dr. Legarza says. “Without the dedication and foresight of all these people, we could not provide this excellent level of care.”

Surgical Services

Surgery can be a crucial step in the fight against cancer, stopping the disease from spreading and, in certain cases, eliminating it entirely. At Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, there’s a whole department dedicated to providing the safest and most effective surgical care.

Our staff is collaborative, compassionate and thorough when interacting with each patient.

“Special care is taken when explaining procedures, and patients are comforted knowing they will receive safe care throughout their stay,” says Krystal Flaniken, RN, director of surgical and peri-operative services. “Patients are treated as individuals with different and unique needs — our staff is collaborative, compassionate and thorough when interacting with each patient.”

Before, during and after surgery, patients are surrounded by the well-qualified caregivers who compose the surgical services department at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer. “Patients are the whole reason we practice,” Flaniken says. “Working to earn their trust gives me personal pride in the work I do every day.”
Acute Inpatient Unit

With 20 beds and close to 40 dedicated oncology nurses, the acute inpatient oncology unit is the place for round-the-clock care. This is where cancer patients come when they need more intensive medical assistance.

“Our nurses are trained through the Oncology Nursing Society to provide evidence-based care for cancer patients,” says Suresh Reddy, MD, Saint Mary’s medical director for oncology.

Outpatient Infusion Center

Infusion services are available to patients with cancer and other chronic or life-threatening diseases. When doctors give the go-ahead for cancer patients to receive chemotherapy or other IV treatments on an outpatient basis, these patients become regulars, at least for a little while, at the outpatient infusion center. Here, the infusion nurses provide patients with as much support as possible during this challenging time, by caring, teaching, listening and simply being present.

“These dedicated and hardworking nurses are passionate about their specialized area of nursing and the very rewarding and lasting relationships they form with patients and family members,” says Martha Aiyuk, RN, BSN, oncology certified nurse and manager of oncology services. “For them, going above and beyond the call of duty is the norm.”

Nurses in the outpatient infusion center not only administer chemotherapy medications and blood products, but they also provide patient and family education, and help manage illness and treatment-related symptoms.

“Our nurses develop a relationship with these patients — they know these patients, and that relationships allows our nurses and patients to feel that they are giving and receiving the best possible care,” says Reddy.

Oncology care is intensely personal and can be very emotional, but it’s also full of meaning, opportunities for growth and making significant human connections. “These nurses live the cancer experience with their patients, by embracing their aches and triumphs,” he adds, “and by going beyond to assist patients in their everyday needs.”

The strong bond and open communication between nurses and patients begins to develop day one, when patients are given detailed information about their specific treatment, told what to expect as far as side effects, and encouraged to speak up about any issues.

“Cancer patients know what is important to them and do not sweat the small stuff,” Aiyuk says. “These relationships — between patients, family members and nurses — are real, honest and trustworthy.”
Recently, she helped plan a surprise party for her daughter’s 50th birthday. “Maybe I’ll still be here when one of my granddaughters, eventually, gets married,” Vanderstokker says. “For now, my goal is just to enjoy every day.” Fortunately, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer is just a few minutes away — a single destination filled with state-of-the-art technology and skilled caregivers, dedicated to helping Vanderstokker and other cancer patients meet and exceed their goals well into survivorship.

Effective Treatment Means More Life to Live

One goal drove Nellie Vanderstokker to get up every day and fight for her life. The 79-year-old had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, but she was determined to see her granddaughter graduate college in June 2012. “I was told I would live anywhere from six months to a year, if I was lucky,” Vanderstokker says. “Now, here I am in my 17th month since diagnosis.”

Not only did Vanderstokker live to see her granddaughter graduate college, but she also was present three weeks later, when her other granddaughter graduated high school. “I’m such a fighter because I want to be here with my family,” Vanderstokker says. “My life is so good right now — it’s like a whole new chapter.”

Getting to this chapter of her life involved several types of treatment, planned and provided by a diverse team of experts, all working together under one roof at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer. Without ever leaving Reno, Vanderstokker was able to receive complete, top-level treatment for her pancreatic cancer, including surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

The chemotherapy takes place in the outpatient infusion center at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, where Vanderstokker has developed a second family of sorts. “I have such a good relationship with all the nurses at the infusion center — they’re like my children,” she says. “When you’re around those girls, you don’t feel like you’re different, they make you feel wonderful. They really treat you as a human being,” Vanderstokker adds. “You’re a person, you’re a friend — you become close friends with them.” With help from these friends, Vanderstokker gets to revel in this new chapter of life, which might be titled survivorship.
For cancer patients and survivors, regaining energy, strength and range of motion can represent a wonderful turning point on the road to recovery and increased quality of life. To help patients secure this piece of the healing process, Saint Mary’s has a two-phase Cancer Rehabilitation Program in place. The first phase involves assessment by a team of physical therapists who specialize in cancer rehabilitation, including lymphedema management — in fact, Saint Mary’s has been recognized as an affiliated Lymphedema Treatment Center through the National Lymphedema Network, the only treatment center in northern Nevada to earn this distinction and one of only two recognized nationally. These experts evaluate issues such as pain, scar-tissue adhesions and reduced range of motion, then put together a personal treatment plan for each patient.

When it comes to treating brain tumors, “To be able to, with one visit, give patients multiple options and access to different perspectives is unique,” Dr. Fleming says. “We have patients who come a long way, and to be able to avoid having to make multiple trips for the same information is a huge benefit.” This collaborative approach for patients has proven successful at reaching positive outcomes.

In the program’s second phase, cancer patients and survivors have the option of utilizing Saint Mary’s Center for Health and Fitness, where they can receive personal exercise plans, often based on input from the team of physical therapists. “No other program in this area can match our continuum of care,” says Amanda La Torre, ACSM-HFS, CET, who oversees the exercise portion of the Cancer Rehabilitation Program. “This collaboration between the hospital and the fitness center allows cancer patients to reach higher levels of functioning.”

According to physical therapist and certified lymphedema therapist Nancy Snellgrove, PT, CLT-LANA, this premier program is at the forefront of cancer rehabilitation. “To see fear and anxiety give way to empowerment, pain resolve into relief, and fatigue blossom into energy as the human spirit re-emerges is both humbling and inspiring,” Snellgrove says.
Collaboration and Innovation Enhance Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer

Cancer Committee

“Our cancer committee is responsible for leading the cancer program, through setting goals, monitoring program activity, evaluating patient outcomes and improving the care provided to patients at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer,” says Patty Sredy, RN, BSN, director of oncology services. “The cancer committee ensures our programs are meeting and exceeding the standards set forth by the Commission on Cancer.”

Part of the American College of Surgeons, the Commission on Cancer (COC) is dedicated to improving survival and quality of life for cancer patients through standard-setting, prevention, research, education and the monitoring of comprehensive quality care. Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer is accredited by the COC. “On a regular basis, the cancer committee monitors, assesses and identifies any changes that may be needed to maintain compliance with all the criteria set forth by the American College of Surgeons,” adds Jonathan Tay, MD, chairman for the cancer committee and medical director of radiation oncology.

Cancer Conferences

Along with the cancer committee, cancer conferences are another big reason Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer has been able to earn and maintain its prestigious accreditations, from both the COC and the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers.

“Cancer conferences promote pretreatment consultation among surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, diagnostic radiologists, pathologists, and other cancer specialists — a collaboration that results in improved patient care,” says Katie Legarza MD, radiation oncologist, “Once a patient has been diagnosed, these experts meet to collectively design the best course of treatment for each patient.” Saint Mary’s cancer conferences, which are also called tumor boards, take place once a week for breast cancer patients, once a month for patients with gastrointestinal or thoracic cancers, and twice a month for patients with brain tumors and other cancers that may benefit from stereotactic radiosurgery. “The goal is to positively impact the management of the patient’s care,” Legarza says, “through the discussion of options at any time during the course of treatment.”

Clinical Trials

For some patients at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, one of their options can be to participate in a clinical trial. According to research nurse Janis Pollard, RN, BSN, MPA, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer enrolls 40 to 60 patients into clinical trials each year.

“Clinical trials provide more options for the treatment of patients,” Pollard says. “We screen newly diagnosed patients to see if they may qualify for a trial then communicate with their physicians to confirm candidacy.”

Cancer patients who do qualify are given all the details of the clinical trial, and the decision to participate is always voluntary. Besides providing cancer patients with more treatment options, clinical trials also boost the overall level of care throughout Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer.

“Participating in research enhances the climate of ongoing learning, raises awareness of new techniques and information, and helps promote leading-edge perspectives at our cancer center,” Pollard says. “Physicians and other members of the cancer treatment team are constantly working to keep up with the most current developments and concepts regarding cancer care and understanding different types of cancers.”

For partial list of clinical trials, see page 25.
Leading Technology

Expert physicians access sophisticated technology for better patient outcomes

To keep cancer patients close to home during treatment, while providing the best possible outcomes, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer offers patients the advanced technology and procedures that, in the past, required leaving the region to receive.

In the ever-evolving world of cancer care, offering the most effective treatments means remaining knowledgeable and taking a proactive approach toward continually upgrading technology and advancing procedures.

“Saint Mary’s allows the physicians to be very forward-thinking,” says Jonathan Tay, MD, medical director of radiation oncology. “In this community, we were the first to perform radioactive seed implants for prostate cancer, and we were the first to implement high-dose rate brachytherapy for the treatment of gynecologic and breast malignancies.”

“Saint Mary’s is the first in the state and only in the region to have the CyberKnife robotic radiosurgical system,” he adds, “the first to have a Brain Tumor Clinic, and the first to be accredited as a Comprehensive Breast Cancer Program.”

Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer also holds an accreditation from the American College of Radiology, as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence. This top honor is a direct reflection of the first-rate imaging technology, services and staff at Saint Mary’s.

When local patients have access to leading technology in the fight against cancer, the whole region stands to benefit.

From precise imaging to progressive procedures, there’s no doubt that the right technology plays a critical role in achieving the best outcomes for cancer patients. When local patients have access to leading technology in the fight against cancer, the whole region stands to benefit.

Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer is committed to providing patients and staff with some of the most advanced equipment and technology available for the diagnosis and treatment of specific cancers. Such advanced equipment is a vital resource for attracting leaders in the field of oncology and allowing cancer patients to receive state-of-the-art best practices, from diagnosis to treatment to survivorship, close to home.
PET-CT

When it comes to defining the extent of malignancy and evaluating responses to treatment, physicians at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer turn to PET-CT imaging technology. This device offers the highest resolution available in our region, along with relatively short scan times. Besides staging cancers and assessing progress, data from PET-CT scans also is used to prescribe CyberKnife treatment for certain tumors.

Mammography

From digital mammography, breast ultrasound and breast MRI to several forms of breast biopsy procedures, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer stands ready to obtain the images and samples necessary to achieve the best outcomes in the treatment of breast cancer. “We offer a full complement of breast imaging and breast biopsy procedures,” says Steve Sweet, RT, ARRT, director of radiology and cardiovascular imaging services. “All mammograms are read by board-certified radiologists, who are credentialled to interpret the images and perform breast biopsy procedures.” As a result of the outstanding mammography services available at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, the American College of Radiology has awarded Saint Mary’s Imaging Services accreditation as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence.

Endoscopic Ultrasound (EUS)

This leading-edge technology is used to detect cancer in the lungs, gastrointestinal, hepatobiliary and pancreatic systems. EUS is the first and most important step in staging gastrointestinal, biliary or pancreatic cancer. With such precise images and information, physicians can determine the most appropriate treatment plan.

Lung CT

Recently, the National Lung Screening Trial, which involved more than 50,000 current and former heavy smokers, found that screening via low-dose computed tomography (CT) leads to a 20-percent reduction in deaths due to lung cancer, as compared to screening via traditional chest X-ray. Now, low-dose CT screening is available at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, so patients can be screened for lung cancer in the most advanced manner. This state-of-the-art procedure is linked to the early detection of lung cancer, which equates to higher survival rates among patients. “The national trial determined that CT lung screening could detect lung cancers earlier than traditional methods,” Sweet says. “Detecting lung cancer early gives physicians more treatment options.”

Advanced Imaging

Diagnostic images are integral to the effective treatment of cancer. Designed to provide a precise picture of each patient’s cancer, these images allow experts to plan the best treatment strategy and assess efficacy every step of the way. At Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, physicians and patients have access to the most up-to-date imaging technology. Here, we shine the spotlight on a few of these valuable imaging services.
For cancer patient Dale Gipson, choosing CyberKnife to treat his brain tumor was a simple decision. With no cutting and no pain, the procedure could remove the tumor using an ultra-high, ultra-precise dose of radiation. “There would be no cutting into my skull, so CyberKnife sounded good to me,” Gipson says. “They were able to get rid of the tumor in just one treatment, which took less than one hour.”

Follow-up MRIs every two months showed no sign of the tumor’s return, and now these scans have been pushed back to every three months. “What was a brain tumor is now just a scar, and he’s had no additional brain tumors,” says Gipson’s wife, Joanne.

The Reno-based couple, both 78-years-old and avid travelers, had been planning a two-week cruise from Los Angeles to Hawaii when the cancer diagnosis came. That cruise was cancelled, and Gipson instead began his journey toward recovery at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer. “I had been diagnosed with prostate cancer, so I went through a series of tests to see if the cancer had spread,” he says. “What they found was that I had stage IV melanoma in my stomach and lung, and a tumor had also showed up in my brain.”

Treatment for his prostate cancer was put on hold in order to treat the more aggressive melanoma. Gipson was put on a course of infusion therapy, which he received once every three weeks for a total of four doses. “I went through that treatment, and the follow-up exams showed that the melanoma in my stomach was gone, and then the one in my lung was gone,” he says. “That’s when [radiation oncologist] Dr. Jaime Shuff suggested CyberKnife for the brain tumor.”

Fortunately, accessing this top-level technology did not involve any unwanted travel plans. CyberKnife is located right here in Reno, at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer. “This is an asset to our community, keeping patients close to home for treatment they would otherwise have to leave the area to receive,” Dr. Tay says. “Here in Reno, we use CyberKnife to treat over 200 cases a year.”
Dr. Tay reports that CyberKnife is the only technology that can track moving tumors, such as lung tumors that move with respiration, using a real-time imaging system to adjust the delivery and placement of radiation according to tumor position.

“Other technologies treat a larger area of normal tissue to encompass the tumor’s range of motion, without seeing where the tumor really is while the radiation beam is being delivered,” he says. “With CyberKnife, we can often treat a tumor that has come back after previous conventional radiation therapy, because of the ability to be conformal and avoid re-treating a lot of the surrounding normal tissue that would otherwise not be able to tolerate more radiation.”

The pinpoint accuracy that CyberKnife is famous for, comes from the interplay between real-time imaging and a computer-controlled robotic arm. “Because the source of the radiation is on a robotic arm, a radiation beam can be delivered from over 1,000 locations outside the body to crossfire on the tumor,” Dr. Tay says. “This allows CyberKnife to be more conformal and precise than other methods in performing radiosurgery.”

The term radiosurgery refers to the use of high-dose, tumor-targeted radiation that aims to ablate the entire tumor. With CyberKnife, the process can take anywhere from one to five sessions, and the entire treatment can be completed in one day to one week. Traditional forms of radiation therapy typically involve 10 to 44 sessions, which can take two to nine weeks to complete.

Fortunately, accessing this top-level technology did not involve any unwanted travel plans.

Another benefit of CyberKnife is its ability to treat tumors not only in the brain, but also the body. Around 45 percent of the CyberKnife treatments performed at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer are for brain tumors, and about 25 percent are for lung tumors. In certain cases, CyberKnife also is used to treat prostate cancer, as well as spine, liver, pancreatic, adrenal and kidney tumors.

As for patient Dale Gipson, the single CyberKnife treatment for his brain tumor, coupled with the other treatments he’s received at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer — including an injection every three months to keep the prostate cancer at bay — has allowed him to proceed with his travel plans.

“We ended up taking that cruise from Los Angeles to Hawaii — the one we had to cancel before — in April 2012,” Gipson says. “Then, we had my 60-year high school reunion, and I was feeling well enough to be the emcee.”

Gipson and wife Joanne have no intention of putting any more plans on hold — the couple hosted Thanksgiving for the whole family in November, and they have trips booked to Las Vegas and Charleston, South Carolina, for February and April 2013.
Comprehensive Treatment Options

Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer provides all the top technology and treatment options most cancer patients will ever need, beneath one roof at one single location. This not only offers the utmost convenience for cancer patients and their family members, but it can also be downright lifesaving. Read on to learn more about the advanced treatment options available at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, which allow cancer patients to receive optimal care close to home.

High-dose Rate Brachytherapy

This advanced radioactive seed therapy offers greater convenience and is another treatment option for prostate, breast, head and neck, lung, esophageal cancers, and other malignancies. Using higher doses of radiation in a concentrated area, brachytherapy successfully shortens treatment time while sparing normal tissue. In some cases, this option is equivalent to conventional radiation therapy but requires shorter treatment time,” says Jonathan Tay, MD.

Low-dose Rate Brachytherapy

A common use for low-dose rate brachytherapy is prostate seed implant therapy. Saint Mary’s has the most experienced seed implant program in the region, with more than 1,000 implants completed by the brachytherapy team. With seed implantation, 80 to 100 radioactive seeds are implanted in the prostate gland in an outpatient procedure. Radiation is delivered over time to eradicate the cancer. Seed implantation has a long track record of proven success and is an excellent option for the management of organ-confined prostate cancer.

Intensity-modulated Radiation Therapy

Saint Mary’s routinely uses intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) to treat prostate and head and neck cancers, as well as breast, brain, abdominal and pelvic tumors. IMRT is an advanced mode of radiotherapy that uses high-energy, computer-controlled X-rays to deliver precise doses of radiation to malignant tissue. Because the IMRT focuses these rays at malignant tissues, the radiation exposure to surrounding healthy tissues is minimized, and there are fewer side effects.

Linear Accelerator

With linear accelerator treatment, patients receive multiple treatments while intense beams target their malignancies with pinpoint accuracy. In general, each treatment visit lasts approximately 15 minutes. However, some treatments may require more time, such as IMRT, which focuses multiple radiation beams directly on the tumor itself to help reduce potential damage to surrounding tissues. Sixty to 70 percent of cancer patients require this form of radiation at some point during cancer illness,” says Dr. Tay. “It’s used often with surgery, chemotherapy and other forms of radiation.
Double-balloon enteroscopy (DBE) offers a number of advantages over other small bowel imaging techniques, in that it allows for complete evaluation of the entire gastrointestinal tract. By providing high-resolution cross sections of small bowel lesions, DBE combined with endoscopic ultrasound contributes to the diagnosis of small bowel diseases. Difficult cases of occult gastrointestinal bleeding and small bowel cancers can be evaluated and most times completely treated with this noninvasive endoscopic method.

CyberKnife
The Region’s Most Advanced Radiation Delivery System
This computer-controlled radiosurgery system delivers radiation to tumors anywhere in the body. “Saint Mary’s is the only facility in northern Nevada that has CyberKnife, the most technologically advanced radiation delivery system available in the world,” Jonathan Tay, MD, medical director of Saint Mary’s Radiation Oncology, says of CyberKnife, which is a combination of robotics and computer-aided technology.

“It is the only radiation delivery system that constantly tracks the location of the tumor, allowing for compensation for that movement during treatment. With its sub-millimeter accuracy, CyberKnife is able to spare surrounding healthy tissue from radiation damage.”

The precision and accuracy of CyberKnife technology allows physicians to reach cancerous and benign tumors that in the past may have been impossible to treat. In addition, patients experience no pain during the noninvasive treatments and are able to immediately return to normal activity.

da Vinci Surgical System
This high-tech system offers a minimally invasive option for the kind of complex surgical procedures that, when performed using traditional methods, would require large open incisions. With da Vinci robotic-assisted surgery, the incisions are tiny, which means less trauma to the body, decreased blood loss, lower risk of infection, faster healing, reduced post-surgery pain, minimal scarring and shorter hospital stays, among other patient benefits.
Cancer Research and Quality Data

Experts use global cancer data to achieve superior clinical outcomes

At Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, patients have access to state-of-the-art technology and procedures that offer real hope in the war on cancer. At one location, patients are provided with care plans from a team of cancer experts. The team at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer attends conferences and participates in research to stay abreast of new treatment strategies and future research in order to provide the best outcomes for patients.

Here, you will find the most recent and relevant data on breast, lung and esophageal cancer — three cancer sites that have become focused areas of expertise at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer — and get a glimpse of the top-level care provided for patients who have been diagnosed with one of these three cancers, as well as comparing Saint Mary’s statistics on stage, and treatment to other similar cancer programs nationally.

Patients also have access to experts on specific kinds of cancer — and these experts are tapped into global cancer data.

2010 Breast Cancer Data

Saint Mary’s Regional Medical Center is proud to be an Accredited NAPBC program. This accreditation is a testament to our commitment to providing patients with access to high-quality cancer resources and treatment programs. Below you will see our comparative data for breast cancer.

This graph shows the percent of patients who receive breast conservation surgery vs mastectomy as their first course of treatment. The fact that Saint Mary’s has consistently stayed well above the NAPBC Standard of 50 percent shows the strong commitment the physicians at Saint Mary’s have by offering all patients who are eligible breast conservation surgery.
The majority of breast cancers diagnosed at Saint Mary’s are invasive rather than non-invasive, a trend that is reflected nationally as well.

Saint Mary's breast cancer patients that have radiation therapy as part of their treatment plan, receive whole breast radiation more often than accelerated partial breast radiation. There is a specific criteria that has to be met in order for a patient to be considered eligible as a partial breast radiation candidate.

The majority of Saint Mary’s breast cancer patients are diagnosed between ages 50 – 69. This is consistent with what other CoC Approved Comprehensive Cancer Programs are experiencing nationally.

Saint Mary’s shows a slightly higher rate of breast cancer patients receiving radiation as part of their treatment plan, and is in close accordance with all modalities compared with other CoC approved Comprehensive Cancer Programs Nationwide. The physicians at Saint Mary’s are committed to using nationally recognized treatment guidelines.

Saint Mary’s is showing a higher percentage of breast cancer patients being diagnosed at early or stage 1 compared with other CoC Approved Comprehensive Cancer Programs Nationally. Early detection and screening programs for breast cancer continues to be a primary focus at Saint Mary’s.
It’s no secret — mammograms save lives

NAPBC Accredited Breast Center emphasizes importance of early screening

The little card came in the mail, reminding Jacki Hallerbach it was time to schedule her mammogram. She made the appointment — after all, it's covered by insurance — even though she had no pressing concerns about breast cancer. “I have very few risk factors,” says the 44-year-old wife and mother of two. “I work out all the time, I love to bike and run, I’ve always been lean, and I breast-fed my children. “I had even just been to my OB/GYN for my annual,” Hallerbach adds, “and nothing was detected.”

The entire spectrum of breast cancer care is available under one roof at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer.

Regardless, she went ahead and received her regular mammogram screening at Saint Mary’s — and it revealed a small lump in her right breast. “What they detected was so small that it could not be felt,” Hallerbach says. “I would not have noticed anything for maybe a couple more years, and at that point it could have been more extensive and required more treatment.” Once the radiology team at Saint Mary’s discovered the tiny lump, Hallerbach was quickly scheduled for more thorough imaging — digital mammography, ultrasound and breast MRI — followed by stereotactic breast biopsies on both breasts.

“Throughout the diagnostic process, I was really impressed by the whole team,” Hallerbach says. “The radiologist showed me my mammogram and what was concerning them, and the MRI techs held my hands during the biopsies and were just so kind. I felt like I was in great hands,” she continues. “I felt like I was among friends.”

Hallerbach was also among experts — the imaging services department at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer is accredited by the American College of Radiology as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence.

By performing the breast MRI on both of Hallerbach’s breasts, the experienced team discovered a point of concern in her left breast as well. “The breast MRI had shown a little nodule on my left,” Hallerbach says. With confirmation that the small lump in her
Today, Jacki is cancer free and getting back to living a beautiful life with her husband and children.

right breast was cancer, and that the one in her left breast could one day become cancer, Hallerbach elected to undergo a bilateral mastectomy. “I didn't want to wake up worrying about this in the middle of the night,” she says. “My surgeon [Michelle Chu, MD] presented all the information and all the options, and then she allowed me and my husband to make the decision.”

Hallerbach's surgery took place in November 2012, aiming to eliminate both the cancer and the need for further treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation. From diagnosis through treatment, Hallerbach was able to receive the best possible breast cancer care, without having to travel to another city — or even another building. The entire spectrum of breast cancer care is available at one campus at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer.

The high level of this close-to-home care was officially confirmed in 2010, when Saint Mary's Center for Cancer became the first breast center in Nevada to be accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC).

“The NAPBC accreditation lets local breast cancer patients know that we provide the best evidence-based practice and access to clinical trials,” says Laurie Schirling, RN, OCN, breast cancer nurse navigator. “It also means that the expertise of our entire team is invested in the best possible outcomes and quality care of the patient.”
Screening is vital for the early detection and effective treatment of lung cancer, which is the leading cause of cancer death among both men and women. Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer is equipped with the most advanced technology available for lung cancer screening, low-dose computed tomography (CT).

“CT lung cancer screening has been proven in a large national trial to markedly reduce mortality, or chance of dying, from lung cancer,” says John H. Ganser, MD, FACS, a Fellowship-trained thoracic surgeon.

“Cancers found in screening are found at an earlier, more treatable stage than those that are found when symptoms from the cancer prompt evaluation.”

According to Suzi Puryear, RN, BSN, WCN, who serves as the nurse navigator for lung cancer patients, the survival rate for lung cancer approaches 70 percent when the cancer is caught early and surgically removed. “The numbers speak for themselves when it comes to the importance of screening for lung cancer,” Puryear says. “Patients with certain risk factors, such as significant smoking history, are encouraged to undergo low-dose CT lung screening.”

When lung cancer is detected, the experienced team at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer stands ready to provide the most appropriate and expeditious care. “Saint Mary’s provides a comprehensive approach to treating all cancers, including lung cancer, in a caring, compassionate way,” Dr. Ganser says. “While national standards are closely followed, each patient is treated as an individual, as every case represents a different set of circumstances that must be considered.”

Each month, an array of oncology experts gather to discuss these circumstances and develop the best care plan for patients with lung cancer, during what is known as a cancer conference or tumor board. When that care plan calls for surgery, Dr. Ganser can offer the patient a full range of options. “I perform a variety of surgical procedures to treat lung cancer,” he says, “from traditional to leading-edge, minimally invasive procedures, such as Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery (VATS) and da Vinci robotic surgery.”

Throughout the entire process, nurse navigator Puryear is there to help lung cancer patients understand the diagnosis, treatment methods, possible side effects and more. She also works to make sure each lung cancer patient receives treatment as soon as possible. “Time from diagnosis to treatment is crucial in any cancer,” Dr. Ganser says. “With the addition of Saint Mary’s nurse navigator, we have demonstrated a significant reduction in time to treatment with lung cancer patients. “Patients also feel more secure knowing they have someone to turn to for any of their needs,” he continues. “It’s an incredible addition to our already outstanding program.”
Saint Mary’s shows a higher rate of 2010 NSCLC patients being treated with radiation therapy compared to other CoC approved comprehensive cancer programs in all states. With the ability to perform stereotactic radiosurgery on the Saint Mary’s CyberKnife machine has given lung patients who are either not a good surgical candidate or their personal preference is against surgery another viable treatment option.

Saint Mary’s shows a better rate of NSCLC patients getting diagnosed at an earlier stage (stage I) compared to other CoC approved comprehensive cancer programs nationally.

Saint Mary’s shows a higher rate of 2010 SCLC patients being treated with radiation therapy compared to other CoC approved comprehensive cancer programs in all states. With the ability to perform stereotactic radiosurgery on the Saint Mary’s CyberKnife machine has given lung patients who are either not a good surgical candidate or their personal preference is against surgery another viable treatment option.

Saint Mary’s shows a better rate of NSCLC patients getting diagnosed at an earlier stage (stage I) compared to other CoC approved comprehensive cancer programs nationally.
Esophageal Cancer Treatment Options Bring Confidence to Patients

Treating patients with esophageal cancer has become an area of expertise at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer. Here, patients have access to the full spectrum of advanced care, from diagnosing and staging the cancer to removing it in the most effective manner.

A patient in any and all stages of esophageal cancer can feel confident that they will be properly assessed and given options to all possible treatments in a single center.

“By providing every possible diagnostic and therapeutic option available, a patient in any and all stages of esophageal cancer can feel confident that they will be properly assessed and given options to all possible treatments in a single center,” says Sam Nourani, MS, MD, advanced therapeutic gastroenterologist and director of interventional gastroenterology at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer.

“In the setting of esophageal cancer, we provide the sentinel step of staging the cancer,” Dr. Nourani says, “which determines the mode of therapy for successful treatment.”

When esophageal cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, patients have the option of endoscopic mucosal resection, a treatment method capable of removing the cancer without invasive surgery or chemotherapy.

“The team at Saint Mary’s and I are able to remove the lesion endoscopically the same day, without need for a large operation or lengthy hospital stay,” Dr. Nourani says.

“The patient walks into the hospital, gets the cancer endoscopically resected, and then walks out the same day — cancer cured.”

Patients have the option of endoscopic mucosal resection, a treatment method capable of removing the cancer without invasive surgery or chemotherapy.

Sam Nourani, MD
Gastroenterology
Saint Mary’s shows a higher percentage of adenocarcinoma over squamous cell carcinoma compared to similar cancer programs nationally. This is consistent with the majority of esophageal cancers at Saint Mary’s being diagnosed in the distal or lower portion of the esophagus.

Saint Mary’s first course of treatment is in close accordance with other similar institutions nationally. A slightly higher rate of multiple modality treatment is seen compared nationally. This can be attributed to a higher rate of esophagus cancer being diagnosed at an earlier stage, which is reflected in the staging comparison graph.

Saint Mary’s has a higher percentage of esophagus patients being diagnosed at an early stage or stage I cancer; this can be attributed to better screening.

Saint Mary’s shows a higher percentage of adenocarcinoma over squamous cell carcinoma compared to similar cancer programs nationally. This is consistent with the majority of esophageal cancers at Saint Mary’s being diagnosed in the distal or lower portion of the esophagus.
Keeping a complete record of each cancer case — from the initial diagnosis and treatment methods to the immediate and long-term results — allows oncology experts at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer to continually improve the care each patient receives. Collecting and managing this data is the main mission of Saint Mary’s Cancer Registry. This mission involves case-finding, abstracting, follow-up and quality control, along with proper reporting and distribution of the data and associated findings.

“By collecting accurate and complete data, Saint Mary’s Cancer Registry provides a tool for physicians and researchers to evaluate the efficacy of treatment methods,” says Brenna Caine, who is certified by the National Cancer Registrars Association and serves as supervisor of Saint Mary’s Cancer Registry.

Working with fellow staffer Martha Underwood, CTR, Caine monitors data for each cancer patient diagnosed and/or treated at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer, including lifelong follow-up to evaluate post-treatment outcomes and quality of life. This data is analyzed on a regular basis, and the findings are reported to staff at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer.

Saint Mary’s Cancer Registry also reports cancer data to the Nevada State Cancer Registry and the National Cancer Database (NCDB) - one of the privileges that comes with national accreditation.

Saint Mary’s Cancer Program members have access to these tools and routinely use them to compare patient care throughout the institution to treatment rendered at comparably sized cancer programs elsewhere. Outliers can be targeted for additional study and discussed at the multidisciplinary Cancer Conferences, thereby assuring Saint Mary’s patients of a team approach to cancer care that focuses on the highest possible standards.

Examples of Oncology Clinical Trials at Saint Mary’s During 2012

**RTOG 1005** – “Phase III Trial of Accelerated Whole Breast Irradiation With Hypofractionation Plus Concurrent Boost versus Standard Whole Breast Irradiation Plus Sequential Boost – Principal Investigator, Kathleen Legarza MD

**NSABP B39 / RTOG 0413** – “A Phase III Study of Conventional Whole Breast Irradiation (WBI) Versus Partial Breast Irradiation (PBI) “ – Principal Investigator, Jonathan Tay MD

**NSABP P-5** – “Statin Polyp Prevention Trial in Patients with Resected Colon Cancer” – Principal Investigator, Vodur Suresh Reddy MD

**CCCWF 97609** - “Impact of Genomics and Exposures on Disparities in Breast Cancer Radiosensitivity” - Principal Investigator Kathleen Legarza MD

**Retrospective Study** - “Prognostic Value of PSA Kinetics as a Predictor of Long-Term and Relapse-Free Survival” – Principal Investigator, Jonathan Tay MD - [Results have been published in the International Journal of Radiation Oncology Biology Physics (The Red Journal) November 2012]

For a full list of Clinical Trials, visit saintmarysreno.com/cancer
Saint Mary’s Regional Medical Center Cancer Committee Membership – 2012

Jonathan Tay, M.D. - Committee Chairman/Med. Director
Jaime Shuff, M.D. - CoC Cancer Physician Liaison
Suresh Reddy, M.D. - Medical Director for Oncology
Patty Sredy, R.N. - Cancer Program Administrative Director

Required Physician Member Listing
Kelle Brogan, M.D./ Reed Dopf, M.D. - Palliative Care
Brian Davis, M.D. - Pathology
Mark McAllister, M.D. - Radiology
Michelle Chu, M.D. - Surgery

Kathleen Legarza, M.D. - Radiation Oncology
Sowjanya Reganti, M.D. - Medical Oncology
Tejvir Singh, M.D. - Medical Oncology/Hematology
Sam Nourani, M.D. - Gastroenterology
Peter Lim, M.D. - Gynecologic Oncology
John Ganser, M.D. - General Surgery
Bruce Denney, M.D - Pulmonary Medicine
Nathan Slotnick, M.D. - Genetics
Caroline Hastings, M.D. - Pediatric Oncology

Ad Hoc Non-Physician Members
Katie Grimm, R.N., MS - Chief Nursing Officer
Bernd Schwalbe, PharmD, BCPS - Clinical Supervisor Pharmacy
David Chamberlain, MS, DABR - Medical Physicist/RSO
Doug Chapman - Director, Nutrition and Therapies
Susan Drossulis, R.N. - Supervisor, Inpatient Oncology
Karen Fisher - Nutritionist
Gary Aldax/Mike Johnson - Community Outreach & Benefit
Steve Sweet - Director, Imaging Services
Krystal Flaniken, R.N. - Director, Surgery
Nancy Snellgrove - Physical Therapy and Lymphedema Specialist
Jamii Uboldi - Manager, Marketing
Amanda LaTorre - Saint Mary’s Center for Fitness and Cancer Rehabilitation

Ad Hoc Physician Member Listing
Kelle Brogan, M.D./ Reed Dopf, M.D. - Palliative Care
Brian Davis, M.D. - Pathology
Mark McAllister, M.D. - Radiology
Michelle Chu, M.D. - Surgery

Kathleen Legarza, M.D. - Radiation Oncology
Sowjanya Reganti, M.D. - Medical Oncology
Tejvir Singh, M.D. - Medical Oncology/Hematology
Sam Nourani, M.D. - Gastroenterology
Peter Lim, M.D. - Gynecologic Oncology
John Ganser, M.D. - General Surgery
Bruce Denney, M.D - Pulmonary Medicine
Nathan Slotnick, M.D. - Genetics
Caroline Hastings, M.D. - Pediatric Oncology

Required Non-Physician Members
Martha Aiyuk, R.N. - Manager, Oncology Services
Brenna Caine, CTR - Supervisor, Cancer Registry
Dolores Cooler, SW - Social Services/Psychosocial
Cara Caldwell, R.N./Laurie Schirling, R.N. - Breast Nurse Navigator
Suzi Puryear, R.N. - GI/Thoracic Nurse Navigator
Laura Harsh, R.N., N.P. - Infusion Nurse Navigator
Janis Pollard, R.N. - Clinical Research Nurse
Ruth Avila, R.N. - Performance Improvement

For a full list of Clinical Trials, visit saintmarysreno.com/cancer
With a wide range of advanced technology, dedicated oncology caregivers and a steadfast commitment to best practices, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer has emerged as the region’s leading location for complete cancer care.

Saint Mary’s maintains esteemed accreditations from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers, the American College of Radiology, the Joint Commission and the National Lymphedema Network, among others.

This lets local patients know, in no uncertain terms, that Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer has been proven to provide the best possible care for cancer patients at every stage.

Moving forward, Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer will continue to expand local access to leading-edge cancer care, and will continue to keep all patient programs and services in one convenient location.

Without ever leaving the region, cancer patients and their family members can rest assured they are receiving the highest quality care — all under one roof, at Saint Mary’s Center for Cancer.
Saint Mary's Center for Cancer has emerged as the region's leading location for complete cancer care.