

Script – Print - OSF Partnering on Tumor Board in Escanaba

Unique service is benefit for cancer patients

When a patient is determined to have cancer, the initial evaluation, diagnosis and treatment decisions can be the most critical portion of their cancer journey and can substantially influence outcomes.

Through a partnership with Green Bay Oncology, OSF HealthCare St. Francis Hospital & Medical Group has been providing cancer care to the Delta County community for 25 years. Now, they have established a tumor board. Comprised of physicians from various specialties involved in a patient's care, the tumor board provides a dedicated space for discussion among those physicians to determine the best course of treatment for the patient.

The twice per month discussions are aimed at providing the most up to date care in the most expedient fashion for the patient.

"When a patient is diagnosed with cancer it's a dramatic change in their life," says Dr. William Bell, Chief of Surgery at OSF HealthCare St. Francis Hospital. "They want things done quickly, efficiently. And cancer is a multi-disciplinary disease that requires surgeons, oncologists, pathologists, radiologists."

"I'm very excited to bring a lot of these people together in one room or on the phone," says Dr. Brian Burnette, medical oncologist and hematologist with Green Bay Oncology and member of OSF St. Francis Hospital medical staff. "It doesn't draw lines between Bellin or UP Health System or OSF. But we're all just there to discuss and improve the patient care in our communities."

Dr. Burnette also believes that recent changes in cancer care makes an open line of communication between providers even more pertinent.

"Our field is changing very rapidly." says Dr. Brian Burnette, medical oncologist and hematologist with Green Bay Oncology and member of OSF St. Francis Hospital medical staff. "There are patients who have newly diagnosed cancers that we can cure with a much higher success rate than ever before. There are also patients that have cancers that we can't cure that we can often times now control for much, much longer than ever before."

Seeing nearly 200 oncology patients monthly, OSF HealthCare St. Francis Hospital and Medical Group is the third busiest cancer care program in the OSF Ministry.

Dr. Burnette says it's rare across the country for a hospital of this size that is a critical access hospital to have a tumor board with the level of expertise that our surgical colleagues, radiologists and pathologists do to help us take care of patients. Additionally, because of the partnership between Green Bay Oncology and OSF HealthCare, patients don't have to travel for hours and hours for care that they can get just as well, or better, close to home.

Any member of a patient's care team can submit a patient cancer case for it to be presented and discussed by the tumor board. Dr. Bell says the board will review at least three cases every other week.