St. Peter's Hospital is very proud to present its 2011 Cancer Program annual report. Overall, 2011 was a great year for the development and expansion of cancer care in the Helena community and surrounding areas. Better access, enhanced integration, and improved facilities highlight some of the advances St. Peter’s has made to better serve our friends, families and neighbors.

In 2011, we unveiled our brand new Cancer Treatment Center that was funded through many donors who made generous gifts. Dr. Justin Thomas joined Dr. Weiner as a new Medical Oncologist and soon Dr. Andrew Cupino will join the Center as a new Radiation Oncologist to improve access to services and treatment. We expanded our social service capabilities by leveraging our many gracious volunteers. We integrated services across the cancer spectrum to better serve patients and families from diagnosis through survivorship.

St. Peter’s is very proud of the work done to receive accreditation for both its Cancer Treatment Center and Breast Center Program from the American College of Surgeons. Many disciplines worked together to accomplish this to provide the best possible care for cancer patients.

In this annual report you will be introduced to St. Peter’s finest assets related to cancer care, our staff. We are blessed to have outstanding Board certified, experienced physicians and so many highly professional, and trained staff providing care. The team is comprised of the finest doctors, nurses, support staff, and volunteers in the region. The nurses in our Cancer Treatment Center and inpatient unit provide the most compassionate care you will ever encounter. Our Women’s Health Institute and Cancer Support Partnership are second to none thanks to the tireless effort of staff and volunteers.

Thank you for your continued loyalty to St. Peter’s and for helping us support cancer patients and their families as they battle one of life’s greatest challenges. It is because of you and the many great people in St. Peter’s cancer care program that allow our friends to receive world class care where they should, right here at home.

Tom Gregg,
Interim President & CEO
The Cancer Committee of St. Peter’s was established in 1995 and is composed of members from all hospital services involved in the care of cancer patients. The committee meets every two months to plan and assess all cancer-related activities at St. Peter’s Hospital.

The duties of the Cancer Committee are to provide leadership for the Cancer Program and evaluate the quality of cancer patient care and supervision of the Cancer Registry.

The goals of St. Peter’s Cancer Committee include:

- offering a comprehensive, integrated health care delivery system
- improving the overall health status of the community
- achieving and sustaining balanced financial performance of resources
- promoting a culture of teamwork and excellence
- being accountable to the communities we serve
- continuing to improve the quality of care
- to deliver the most advanced treatment for our patients.

Members

Dr. Thomas Weiner .................Medical Oncologist
Dr. Justin Thomas .................Medical Oncologist
Dr. Maria Braman .................Chair, Board of Directors
Dr. Alissa Abentroth .............Surgeon
Dr. Jim Tarver .....................Radiologist
Yvonne Kirk, RN, PhD ............VP Patient Care Services
Vicki Byrd, RNC .....................CTC Nurse
Kari Parmer RNC-IC, MSN . Breast Program Nurse Navigator
Emily Burton, RN OCN .... Oncology Nurse Navigator
Janis Ahlstrom, LSW .............Social Worker
Peggy Stebbins .....................Marketing and Public Relations
D'Ann Silva .........................Cancer Registrar
Russ Bell ............................American Cancer Society
Nancy Bloom .................... American Cancer Society
Sherry Ramuta, RN .......... Hospice and Palliative Care
Mary Stevens ......................Physical Therapy
Marjean Hiesler ...................Director Rehabilitation
Eric Strauss ......................Director of Quality
Brad Hornung ...................Pharmacy
Cancer Treatment Center Update

The last twelve months saw much growth and several new additions to St. Peter’s Cancer Treatment Center. Thanks to the support of the community, the Cancer Center continues to provide the highest level of cancer care to the citizens of Helena and its surrounding communities.

We were joined last August by a new medical oncologist, Justin Thomas, M.D. and this August we welcomed the addition of Andrew Cupino, M.D. who joined our staff as a radiation oncologist. Dr. Cupino earned Bachelor of Science degrees in bioengineering and mathematics from Walla Walla College in Washington and his Medical Degree at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. He completed his Radiation Oncology Residency at the University of Virginia Health System.

Our patients have benefited greatly from the addition of our Breast Cancer Nurse Navigator, Kari Parmer, and we have added another Oncology Nurse Navigator, Emily Burton, to work with patients diagnosed with other forms of cancer.

The staff and physicians of the St. Peter’s Cancer Treatment Center would like to thank the community for all its support in building the new Center and we are dedicated to providing the best in cancer care for our patients.

Thomas Weiner, M.D.,
Oncologist
It feels as though my life has come full circle. I always dreamed of coming home to Montana to practice medicine, raise my family and enjoy all this great state has to offer. My name is Justin Thomas and I am a Helena native. I attended Carroll College where I earned a bachelors degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. I went on to earn my medical degree at the University of Washington School of Medicine. Thereafter, I completed my medicine residency at the University of Utah and my medical oncology fellowship at the Huntsman Cancer Institute.

My philosophy for care is to follow the most efficacious and up to date treatment with regard to each and every patient’s unique situation. I also pride myself on being an empathetic and caring provider. I’m proud of the care we are able to deliver at St. Peter’s. I feel it is as up to date and relevant as the academic institutes from which I trained.

Justin Thomas, M.D.
Oncologist
St. Peter's Women's Health Institute (WHI) offers a team approach to women’s health care. The medical professional’s partner with women to make their choices simpler and keep them more informed.

The WHI was designed as a collaborative organization comprised of St. Peter’s Hospital and aligned members of its medical staff dedicated to developing and promoting coordinated, multi-disciplinary clinical programs tied to important women’s health issues. There are currently two sponsored programs within the WHI, the Breast Program and the Pelvic Relaxation and Urinary Incontinence (PRI) Program.

The Breast Program is nationally accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers The Breast Care program involves a coordinated multi-disciplinary team approach to treatment options and care coordination. Integral to the program is ongoing quality monitoring that ensures that patient services, clinical pathways and outcomes are consistent with national standards. The seamless navigation of clinical care is assisted by Kari Parmer, the Nurse Navigator for the breast program. Parmer is also a leader in educating the community as well as individual women who have breast health questions or concerns. She guides women through their clinical and diagnostic evaluation of any breast abnormalities or concerns. In the event of a breast cancer diagnosis, Parmer assists patients in understanding recommendations made by their physicians. She also helps patients navigate the health care system and connect them to resources to aid in their journey.

The PRI program was established to address the unmet medical needs of approximately 45% of post menopausal women who experience incontinence conditions. St. Peter’s wants women to know they don’t have to live with this discomfort and difficulty. There are numerous options that include noninvasive as well as surgical treatments. The PRI program at St. Peter’s is equipped to assist in finding the right option.

For information about St. Peter’s WHI programs, please contact the Nurse Navigator at 406-495-6780.
One of the youngest patients at St. Peter’s Cancer Treatment Center, 10-year-old McClain Thornquist touched the hearts of many. When McLain rang the Center’s bell last October signifying she completed treatment, a crowd of emotional physicians, nurses, staff, volunteers and patients joined her parents to celebrate.
**Featured Patient: McClain Thornquist**

For 10-year-old McClain Thornquist, finishing her cancer treatment is similar to the turtle winning the race in the children’s classic The Tortoise and the Hare.

The youngest daughter of Helena’s Cynthia and Greg Thornquist recently portrayed a baby bunny in the famous Aesop Fable as part of a visiting Missoula Children’s Theatre troupe to Hawthorne School. McClain described with a big smile how the company comes to her school every year and for how two weeks the students have the opportunity to act, dance, and sing.

The story of the slow-moving tortoise being challenged in a race was symbolic for McClain and her family for she knew that even cancer could be beaten. And that she did.

After being diagnosed in November 2010 with a rare form of bone cancer, McClain endured years’ worth of chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery. She spent the Christmas holiday at St. Peter’s and made several trips to a specialty hospital in Salt Lake City for treatment.

Although she built a positive relationship with St. Peter’s oncologists, nurses and other staff, McClain’s favorite staff to care for her were nurses Emily and Todd Burton. Mrs. Burton cared for McClain in the Cancer Treatment Center while Mr. Burton was McClain’s nurse when she was admitted to the Medical/Oncology Unit. The nurses, who are husband and wife, have two young children themselves.

McLain and her family also appreciate the great care they received from all of the caring nurses on St. Peter’s Oncology Unit. They still keep in touch today through social media.

This summer, McLain underwent another surgery on her right arm. She can lift her arm now but it remains fragile so she will be home schooled for at least six weeks this Fall before she heads back to Hawthorne.

A fifth grader, her favorite topic is science. McClain also enjoys reading books such as the Wimpy Kids and the Dork Diaries series and creates art projects. The young girl says she and her friends also want to start a pet sitting business.

This summer, McLain has been busy with her friends and attended the Grandstreet Theatre School. She plans to continue going to Grandstreet’s after school classes because she aspires to become an actress someday.

McLain is looking forward to getting back to a regular routine of school and being with her friends. Her mother says their ordeal has brought McClain and her older siblings even closer. Big sister Halstyn is enrolling at Carroll this Fall to stay close to McClain and brother Kienan keeps a close eye on her at home. The family says they are also extremely grateful for all the community support they received.

Because, like the determined tortoise, McClain has won her race against cancer, slow and steady.
Cancer Support Partnership Programs

Getting Back Up ........................................ Capital City Health Club
Zumba Gold .............................................. Capital City Health Club
Stretch and Relax ...................................... Capital City Health Club
Aqua Zumba .............................................. Capital City Health Club
Restorative Yoga ....................................... Capital City Health Club
Yoga for Survivors ..................................... Barbara Denowh
Open Swim ................................................ Broadwater Athletic Club
Pilates ......................................................... Fuel Fitness
Yoga ........................................................... Crossroads
Reiki Therapy ............................................ Cathy Jenkins (Space donated by Totty’s Therapeutic Touch)
Cooking for Cancer Patients & Survivors ... Mike, Chef from Mediterranean Grill (Food donated by Van’s Thriftway)
Sketching .................................................. Claudia Schwandt (Space donated by Ben Franklin, supplies provided by SPH Foundation)
Give Cancer the Boot with New Meal Preparation Tips Deb Jones, R.D. (Location donated by Vann’s Appliance)
Jin Shin Jytsu ........................................... Donna Wallace
Cancer Connect Teleconferences

Support Groups

Quilting ...................................................... Daysee Swant (Space Donated by Creative Stitches, supplies provided by SPH Foundation)

Boulder Hot Springs Retreat for Women .. Supplies provided by SPH Foundation, Surviving Cancer Scholarships provided by SPH Foundation
The new Cancer Treatment Center at St. Peter’s officially opened in July 2011. And this new area at St. Peter’s has something unique…

Cancer treatment patients, randomly selected, were invited to help in the design process. Who better than cancer patients to give input into a center for cancer patients? Over a period of months, these patients came to the hospital and met with staff as well as the architect and interior designer. The result:

- More privacy for registration
- More choice, privacy and comfort in the waiting area
- All treatment chairs have windows looking outside, with natural lighting
- More privacy for treatment
- More space for accompanying family members or friends
- A new “boutique” area to help with clothing, hair, wigs, makeup
- Easier access to the Meditation Garden during warm weather

St. Peter’s Foundation funded the entire $1.9 million construction with charitable donations. The Foundation also works weekly with cancer center social workers and case managers to provide extra support for cancer patients. From transportation expenses, to nutritional supplements, to medications, to wigs and scarves, to compression garments, to special fitness and recovery classes, gifts to St. Peter’s Foundation give our cancer patients care that wouldn’t otherwise be there. Call the Foundation at 444-2370 for more information.
April 27, 2012

Dear Neighbor,

There is a small brass bell attached to a wall in St. Peter’s Cancer Treatment Center.

Whenever a patient finishes their final treatment, staff that are able gather around. On their way out, the patient rings the bell. A symbol of the end of treatment. Most people think that our cancer patients are happy and relieved to be done. And we are!

But a week or two later, it creeps in. Treatment’s over…and you’re alone.

When you’re in treatment, the nurses are so attentive and reassuring. Any little change in this or that, they’re right there. Everything is being monitored, the doctors are so nice and you feel soooo cared for! You just know it’s making a difference … and that you’re going to be OK. Because everyone’s taking such good care of you.

Then it ends. And you’re left with this broken body. So now what?

Even with the most wonderful partner, family and friends in the world, you’re apart somehow.

I’m writing you today because more than 300 of us in the Helena area will be newly diagnosed with cancer this year. Every one of them will need our help.

I’ve learned a lot about cancer; what can help when you are suddenly living with it. Helena’s Cancer Support Partnership is a very special way we can all help our friends and neighbors living with cancer. The 2012 Pinwheel Pledge Campaign, by St. Peter’s Foundation, is raising funds for this type of care.

Generous businesses and individuals in our community are already donating their time, facilities...
and experience. From exercise, swimming and yoga classes at area health clubs, to hair, makeup, clothing and nutrition lessons, to special retreats and classes...our community is partnering with St. Peter's Foundation to extend cancer care beyond the walls of the hospital. And it's making a real difference in people's lives.

“Thank you for the opportunity..."Getting Back Up" classes have helped me regain strength, flexibility, balance and energy I lost in treatment. I believe the improvement in my chemotherapy-induced cardiomyopathy is a direct result...”

“The classes I attend have been very beneficial...physically and emotionally debilitated after surgery and chemotherapy...the specially trained instructors (some survivors themselves) aid all stages of recovering cancer patients...”

“...having these classes, these safe places where you can go with no hair, dry mouth, swollen, lumpy body parts that don't move like other people's and other souvenirs of cancer... and there are others who are walking the same path. And you don't have to "be strong" in front of them like you feel you have to be with family and friends. It's not just the physical improvements...”

These classes, and this care, are available to our friends and neighbors with cancer - at no charge - thanks to gifts to St. Peter's Foundation. These gifts pay for the supplies, special clothing, food, and other costs our generous community partners can't cover.

Please join us with your special Pinwheel Pledge for cancer care this spring. Help us continue the treatment and care that means so much to our cancer patients and survivors. Gifts made in Honor or in Memory will be recognized with a colored pinwheel. Cards of notification are sent to whomever you request.

Please consider a gift of at least $10 for every name and pinwheel. On May 24th the pinwheels will be planted by the waterfall at the hospital main entrance. Their bright spinning shapes will bring color into our world, while helping give the best cancer care we can for our families, friends and neighbors.

Thank you,

Lana Anderson

P.S. Cancer Support Partnership activities have been, and continue to be, so important in helping me live with cancer! Please send your Pinwheel Pledge gift today. Help us continue providing the best cancer treatment and care for all our friends and neighbors.

P.P.S. Until there is a cure...St. Peter's Foundation - helping all our cancer patients.

2012 Pinwheel Pledge letter from survivor Lana Anderson.
Calming the fears of scared, angry, and anxious patients when they first start chemotherapy is the best part of Oncology Nurse Mary Thomas’ job.
It was 16 years ago that Thomas began working at St. Peter’s Cancer Treatment Center, after serving for 14 years in various other hospital departments. She recalls working out of a small medical records office with one other person. At first she was a radiation nurse and two years later moved to medical oncology when Dr. Tom Weiner joined the staff.

Thomas has watched St. Peter’s Cancer Treatment Center nearly double in size, from its initial 4,000 square feet to the current facility’s 7,300 feet.

Of her work, Thomas said, “It is very rewarding and we’re required to learn new things all of time.” She also enjoys the patients because they are in a special class. “They do not complain, and do appreciate every day,” Thomas said.

This oncology certified nurse deals with the difficult parts of her job by keeping her work at the hospital. Most days she says she can stay cheerful but does hesitate in participating in events such as the Relay for Life because the luminaries remind her of the “numbers of wonderful people who we’ve lost”.

She explained that on work days she is totally involved with her patients but that on her days off, she focuses on her family. “Patients are here for a journey with us,” she explained, “we are the bridge that brings them back to survivor. The minute a patient is diagnosed, they are a survivor, and they already have hope when they are told they have cancer. Life is too short and should be sweet,” Thomas emphasized.

“Our goal is to keep patients alive and smiling. We come along on their journey even if they are done with their treatment,” explaining how the patients come to the clinic to see the doctors and nurses. The nurses keep informed of their hospice patients by phone and communicating with the hospice nurses to make sure they are comfortable and at peace.

Thomas admits she has seen miracles in her work. “There have been patients expected to die who came back after treatment,” she said. “It’s these patients who come in with a smile who taught me to accept difficult situations with courage, hope and a little dose of humor.”

Recently, Thomas changed her schedule to work only three days a week. Her husband, Larry, retired two years ago and spends precious time with their six grandchildren; Thomas says the youngsters never saw her and she wanted to be a part of their lives.

Asked how it is working under her son, Oncologist Dr. Justin Thomas who joined the team this past year, she says at first she was nervous about it and agreed to be the phone nurse so she wouldn’t interact with him as much. But, she missed patient contact too much and went back to her regular position. She has been caught calling him “lovey” at work and he calls her “Mom.”

Thomas is one of six nurses and a patient navigator who assist 20 to 30 patients daily while the two doctors treat about 60 patients. Thomas said on average the Center sees two new patients a day and treats over 18,000 patients annually.
George “Russ” Bell, Ph.D., who spearheaded the development of many diagnostic products in cancer that are used in clinical laboratories worldwide, began volunteering at St. Peter’s in Spring 2010 and now serves as the American Cancer Society’s Cancer Resource Chair while weekly assisting patients at the Cancer Treatment Center.

One of Dr. Bell’s most moving volunteer experiences was about a year ago when he witnessed young McClain Thornquist, who after months of chemotherapy and hospital stays, was about to reach the bell mounted in the center that is rung when patients finish their final treatment. He described with tears in his eyes how, because she was too short to reach the bell intended for adults, her father needed to lift her up. Everything in the center stopped for a moment as she was surrounded by a group of patients leaning on their IV poles, doctors and nurses, and volunteers who cheered her on. “It’s a special moment. The feeling of joy and hope is overwhelming.”

A cancer survivor, Dr. Bell says his volunteering is more about giving back and being close to patients. He sees volunteers as a small part of a care pathway for patients. Dr. Bell exclaimed, “It’s interesting and we volunteers love the patients and staff!”

However, he and the other volunteers also see patients relapse and come back for more treatment and sometimes they read their names in graduate work. He worked for an amazing physician who taught him that if doctors had better information, they could do a better job of caring for their patients. Dr. Bell then developed diagnostic tests to measure things that were not previously measureable and the same type of technology is used today at St. Peter’s and throughout the world.

“One on hospital rounds, the doctor showed me patients that took time to diagnose or could not be adequately monitored because lab tests didn’t exist yet. He asked me to help him be a better doctor by working to develop such tests. I learned firsthand how wonderful it is to be a part of the cure team.”
obituaries. “You have to get your head on right,” Dr. Bells says of the specially trained volunteers. “We all die at some time.”

Part of what Dr. Bells feels is the success of St. Peter’s volunteer program is the monthly meetings he organizes for the other volunteers. “We share information, do some crying, and learn from each other how to do a better job of taking care of the cancer patients. It’s a fulfilling experience.”

At St. Peter’s, volunteers are given just the patients’ first names. They help the nurses by serving patients lunch or coffee, comforting them with pillows and warm blankets or just visiting with them in an attempt to cheer them up. “We try to give them what they are looking for,” Dr. Bell explained sharing how after visiting with one patient, he learned the man really liked grapes and upon subsequent visits, he brought the patient grapes from the cafeteria to enjoy during his treatment.

“We develop a relationship with patients,” Dr. Bell said of the volunteers. He added that there are a lot of people coming to the center each day and although some patients are just having a checkup or blood work, others are enduring several hours of treatment for numerous weeks or months. “Even though most of our volunteers are survivors, we never talk about the disease with patients as that is not our job— we just give love, and they give love back.” Dr. Bell explained that he often sees patients’ appreciation in their eyes, “They look like they want to give us a hug but they can’t, so they hug us with their eyes.”

In addition to patients, the volunteers have also developed meaningful relationships with the center’s nurses who Dr. Bell describes as “the best.” “They were apprehensive of us at first,” Dr. Bell said of the nursing staff. “However, after two years of helping with simple tasks and freeing them up to spend more time with the patients, they accepted us and I think are glad we are there.”

Retired from Beckman Coulter, Inc., Dr. Bell had served as the company’s Senior Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer. He was also Executive Vice President of Global Businesses and served as President & CEO of Hybritech Inc., a former subsidiary of Elí Lilly and Company. Dr. Bell was also president, medical director and owner of Jacksonville Reference Laboratories in Florida and later sold the business to Roche Biomedical Laboratories. He also worked as a biochemist and development manager at E.I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co.

Born in Atlanta, Dr. Bell received his Doctorate in biochemistry at the University of Georgia. He earned his Master of Science degree in bacteriology and Bachelor of Science degree in applied biology at Georgia Tech and is a member of Phi Kappa Phi scholastic honor society.

Dr. Bell serves on the Advisory Boards of the Petit Institute of Bioscience and Bioengineering at Georgia Tech, the Wallace G. Coulter Foundation and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis. He has been President of the Beckman Coulter Foundation since its formation and is a member of St. Peter’s Cancer Committee and the Hospital Foundation’s Board of Trustees. Dr. Bell and his wife of 40 years, Sharon, reside in Clancy.
**BY THE NUMBERS:** A Look at the Patients We Serve

**Number of Cases by Site**

- Breast: 60
- Lung and Bronchus: 50
- Prostate Gland: 40
- Colon: 30
- Other: 20
- Urinary Bladder: 10
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma: 8
- Leukemias: 7
- Rectum: 6
- Pancreas: 5

**Gender of Patients**

- Male: 200
- Female: 150

**Most Frequent Histologies**

- Adenocarcinoma: 80
- Duct Cell CA: 70
- Small/No Cell CA: 60
- Squamous Cell CA: 50
- Pap-Tran Cell CA: 40
- Refractory Anemia: 30
- Lymphoid Anemia: 20
- Lobular CA: 10
- Malignant Lymphoma: 9
- Neoplasm: 8

**Survival Rates**

- Localized
- All Stages
- Regional
- Distant
### Number of Cases by County of Residence

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### Age at Diagnosis

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