

A NATIONAL MODEL FOR TREATMENT

**R**etired firefighter Andy Spedden and Guinness, his German shepherd, are familiar faces around the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute. The pair regularly visits patients and staff, and is part of the Paws for People therapy dog program. But last fall, the roles were reversed. Andy became the patient.

"I thank God for this place," Andy said. "Our connection to the Graham Cancer Center led me to the best treatment for my lung cancer. Guinness and I knew about the good work they do here, and now we brag about it to everyone who will listen."



# role reversal

Andy Spedden and Guinness spend hours at the Graham Cancer Center comforting patients and staff with the Paws for People therapy dog program.

## Multidisciplinary approach improves outcomes

Patients with lung or esophageal cancer have the option to sit down with family members and an entire team of cancer specialists at the Thoracic/Esophageal Multidisciplinary Center (MDC).

A surgeon, a medical oncologist, an interventional pulmonologist, a radiologist and a radiation oncologist team with health professionals from every pertinent discipline – a nurse navigator and research nurse, a dietitian, a health psychologist and social worker. The entire team has one focus: an effective treatment plan for each patient's individual type of cancer.

"This scenario was unheard of just 10 years ago," explained Chief of Thoracic Surgery Charles Mulligan, Jr., M.D., "but it has proven to be highly effective in facilitating the most comprehensive treatment plan and the shortest time to treatment for the patient."

Depending on the patient's individual needs, experts in other fields may join the team. In addition, the Graham Cancer Center offers a host of specialized services including survivorship, pain and symptom management, genetic counseling, wellness and well-being programs, pastoral care, smoking cessation and a follow-up clinic for young adults who have survived childhood cancer.

**"Guinness and I knew about the good work they do here, and now we brag about it to everyone who will listen."** **Andy Spedden**

## Latest, minimally invasive treatments

The Graham Cancer Center offers the most advanced, minimally invasive ways to detect and treat lung/esophageal cancers, reducing the need for higher-risk procedures and increasing treatment options.

Dr. Mulligan and Andy's thoracic surgeon, Brian Nam, M.D., along with Interventional Pulmonologist Tuhina Raman, M.D., specialize in endobronchial ultrasound and the latest navigational bronchoscopy techniques, offered at few other centers in the region. These technologies helped to diagnose and stage Andy's cancer and to facilitate treatment planning to surgically remove the cancer with only a few small incisions.

"Where appropriate, there are techniques beyond conventional surgery, such as video-assisted thoracic surgery (VATS) and minimally invasive esophagectomy, that offer patients shorter hospital stays with less pain and quicker recoveries," Dr. Nam said.

## Next generation medicines and technologies

Many lung and esophageal cancers require a multidisciplinary approach that combines surgery, medical oncology and radiation oncology.

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BRIAN NAM, M.D.

The Graham Cancer Center model of multidisciplinary cancer care has become the standard for leading institutions around the country and abroad.

Through the MDC, patients can benefit from standard and experimental therapies for all stages of disease, including tumors that resist all conventional treatments. These experimental treatments include vaccines, immunotherapy and the latest targeted molecular therapy.

As one of the original National Cancer Institute selected Community Cancer Center sites and a leader in NCI's Community Oncology Research Program, the Graham Cancer Center has one of the top clinical trial enrollment ratios in the country. A burgeoning Translational Cancer Research Program pairs scientists with clinicians to move discoveries closer to everyday medicine, including research with The Wistar Institute in Philadelphia to design the world's first blood test to detect lung cancer.

"We have a number of clinical trials of the new 'targeted' drugs that hone in on the specific genetic makeup of a patient's individual tumor," said Medical Oncologist Gregory Masters, M.D., a member of the Thoracic/Esophageal MDC.

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For example, patients who test positive for commonly identified genetic mutations such as EGFR and ALK may qualify for oral medications designed to attack the mechanisms their tumors are using to grow. "These drugs are often more effective and less toxic than systemic therapies," he said. "We are using clinical trials to determine the best ways to incorporate them at an earlier stage of treatment for optimum results."

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GREGORY MASTERS, M.D.

Radiation Oncology, chaired by Christopher Koprofski, M.D., employs the latest technologies to safely deliver powerful external beam radiation to precisely target tumor cells. The Graham Cancer Center is home to one of the largest high dose brachytherapy (internal radiation) programs, as well as Delaware's first and only CyberKnife robotic radiosurgery system. CyberKnife targets hard-to-reach lung tumors with pinpoint accuracy and offers new options for patients who cannot tolerate surgery or whose tumors are inoperable.

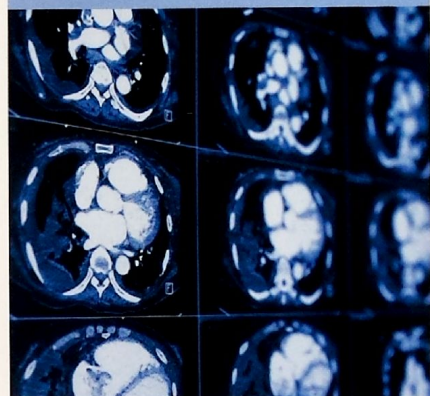
**Lung cancer screening**

Right now only about 17 in 100 patients survive five years from their diagnosis of lung cancer, and the mortality rate for lung cancer exceeds that of breast, colon and prostate cancers combined. The Graham Cancer Center team is working to change those numbers. Studies show that finding lung cancer early is key to increasing the number of patients who survive it. That is why the Graham Cancer Center supports the Christiana Care Medical Group and the State of Delaware to make low-dose CT scan screening for lung cancer accessible to those at risk, according to national guidelines. Counseling and services to help people quit smoking are essential components of the Graham Cancer Center's program.

Andy's history of smoking, coupled with 15 years investigating and putting out fires made him an ideal candidate for Christiana Care's Lung Cancer Screening program. A low-dose CT lung scan, recommended by his family doctor, Dana L. Newswanger, D.O., pinpointed the cancer in Andy's right lung.

"I feel I'm the most blessed man on earth," Andy said. "I would tell everyone to get screened if your doctor recommends it. The CT scan found my lung cancer early, before it had a chance to spread. Now the cancer is out, and I can breathe easy. I couldn't have asked for better care." ■

Andy Spedden's history of smoking made him an ideal candidate for Christiana Care's Lung Cancer Screening program. A low-dose CT scan pinpointed his lung cancer.



**LEARN MORE**

For more information about lung screening or to sign up for an appointment with the Nurse Navigator, call 302-623-CARE (2273).

