

# cancer care

 **Dignity Health.**  
French Hospital Medical Center

Hearst Cancer Resource Center

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## *About Cancer Care*

*Hearst Cancer Resource Center at French Hospital Medical Center provides comprehensive support services for all cancer patients in our community at no charge, and appreciates the generosity of our donors who make it all possible.*

## On the Road to Recovery Together

By Daniel Leon-Gijon

My battle with kidney cancer started in July 2023 during a time of celebration and love. I had just proposed to the love of my life that February, and it was only three months until the day I would say ‘I do’ to my best friend and life partner. The urologist sat us down and said they found the tumor after a CAT Scan procedure, and that the surgery would take place in about three months. With the wind knocked out of me, it was an unreal experience no one ever expects, especially not at 30 years old. As our wedding was fast approaching, I wasn’t only preparing for our special day, but for surgery at Stanford that was scheduled to take place three days after our wedding. It was an intense time indeed, but we had so much love and support from our families and friends, our local church community, Specialty Construction, Inc., and Verdin Marketing co-workers, and the Paragon jiu jitsu community. After the removal of my entire left kidney, the accompanying tumor, and the adjoining adrenal gland, it looked like smooth sailing was ahead.

In November of 2023, we were fortunate enough to take our long-anticipated honeymoon. Our honeymoon holds some of my favorite memories, and I was able to have the thought of cancer off of my mind. Coming back to the “real world” and visiting doctors, the tide began to turn and we learned that the kidney cancer



had turned into a stage 3 diagnosis. This new finding led my urologist, Dr. Dubow, to have me start infusion treatments in December of 2023.

A turning point was when Dignity Health SLO Oncology and Hematology introduced me to the Hearst Cancer Resource Center at a time when I felt alone and without support. I wasn’t sure what lay ahead but Dr. Spillane and the oncology nurses have been kind and supportive through the ongoing infusion treatments. At my six month checkup in March 2024, all tests showed there were no signs of cancer cells anywhere in my body. In these past few months, the financial help from SabesWings and Hearst Cancer Resource Center have been miraculous. I couldn’t be more grateful for the care and support we have received, as I continue this fight towards full health and a cancer-free future.



Angela Fissell, RD

## Balanced Nutrition and Flavorful Eating for Cancer Prevention

By Angela Fissell, RD, Registered Dietitian

**It is widely known genetics and environmental factors play a role in cancer development, but emerging research suggests that food choices can profoundly influence our susceptibility to this disease.**

Maintaining a balanced diet is crucial for overall health, but it's especially important when it comes to cancer prevention. While there's no single food or diet that can guarantee protection against cancer, research suggests that certain dietary patterns can lower the risk. By focusing on balance, nutrition, and flavor, you can optimize your diet to support your body's defenses against cancer.

You may have heard that individual nutrients play important roles in cancer prevention such as "anti-oxidants or phytochemicals," which makes us focus on very specific foods, but it's vital to realize that it is the synergy of these components in a balanced diet that yields the greatest benefit. By incorporating a variety of nutrient-rich foods into your meals and experimenting with taste components to enhance flavor, you can support your body's natural defenses against cancer while enjoying delicious and satisfying meals. Get started with this tasty and simple salad recipe.

### Super Broccoli Salad

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 12 ounces broccoli florets, chopped
- 1 cup of unsweetened white or dark raisins, cranberries or berries
- 1 cup dry roasted slivered almonds
- ¼ cup red onion, finely chopped

#### Dressing:

*2 tbs each:* plain Greek yogurt, honey or maple syrup, apple cider vinegar, olive oil

In a large bowl, mix together the Greek yogurt and honey (or maple syrup). Add vinegar and olive oil. Mix well. Season with salt and pepper. Toss in broccoli, almonds, fruit and onions. Mix, cover and refrigerate. Best when made (1-2 hours) ahead of time.

### Balanced Nutrition and Flavorful Eating for Cancer Prevention

*Join us to explore creative ways to make healthy food taste delicious through a food demonstration highlighting the use of fats, acids, sweet and salt, eliciting audience participation and providing tasty samples!*

**WHEN:** Thursday, July 11, 2024 • 5:30 pm

**WHERE:** Wacker Family Auditorium, Copeland Health Education Pavilion  
at French Hospital/Third floor

To RSVP, contact: [hcrc@dignityhealth.org](mailto:hcrc@dignityhealth.org) or call 805.542.6234

## Regain Muscle Strength and Restore Energy with Cancer Well Fit

Cancer Well Fit is a non-profit program that provides supervised small group exercise programs designed to support the first year cancer survivor. We run three eight-week sessions throughout the year and one four-week reunion session for all of our alumni to participate in at the end of the year. During our sessions we meet three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm. Monday and Wednesday are focused on strength training while Thursday is dedicated to restorative work. We run our program out of the beautiful resort like Avila Bay Athletic Club.

We focus on building muscle after being deconditioned because research shows that building strength supports the body in healing after cancer treatments. Although this is a group class, our knowledgeable and experienced trainers help each participant



start their program where they are on day one and build from there. Our program focuses on strength but is also very comprehensive. We generally start each session with the strength machines in our gym but over the eight weeks we introduce things like TRX, free weights, resistance bands and core work. We also add in lymphedema exercises,

prevention and education. Along with our strength training we have a restorative day where the focus is on breath, stretching, and reconnecting body and mind. We have a rotating schedule of wonderful restorative instructors that introduce our participants to different modalities like Qigong, tai chi, yoga and floor pilates.

**“The program at Avila Bay Athletic Club is a “must” if you are struggling with a cancer diagnosis no matter what stage. The support and education on how to take care of ourselves in addition to the camaraderie among the participants is beyond what I expected. The friendships, the instructors, and the environment of the Club was so positive. I cannot express my gratitude and appreciation to the team of the Well Fit Program enough. Thank you to all!” ~Bobbi Binder (Winter 2024 participant)**



**Avila Bay**  
ATHLETIC CLUB & SPA

6699 Bay Laurel Place  
Avila Beach, CA

Contact: Colby Lindeman  
wellfit@avilabayclub.com  
805-595-7600 x122



If you'd like to know more or inquire about when the next session is starting, please contact Colby Lindeman by email at

wellfit@avilabayclub.com or  
call 805.595.7600 x122



**PASO ROBLES**  
SPORTS CLUB

2975 Union Road  
Paso Robles, CA

Contact: Kathy Thomas  
kthomas@caclubs.com  
805-239-7397

# Rehab for Head and Neck Cancer Treatments

By Jamie Cinotto, DPT, CWS, CLT-LANA, ONC and Hashim Jaderanii, PTA, WCC, CLT



Jamie Cinotto, DPT,  
CWS, CLT-LANA,  
ONC



Hashim Jaderanii,  
PTA, WCC, CLT

## **Did you know?**

**The most common symptom of head and neck cancer is a persistent sore throat.**

**Addressing the side effects of cancer treatment early is key to regaining full function of eating and swallowing while reducing the risk of complications.**

A cancer diagnosis of any type is the beginning of a very daunting and emotional road that often involves a combination of surgery, radiation therapy, and/or medicinal treatment with either chemotherapy or targeted therapies. However, none is more daunting than a cancer diagnosis in the head and neck region. Due to the delicate and important anatomical structures being treated, there can be adverse and very serious side effects during and after treatment.

Radiation therapy, while a vital tool in the fight against head and neck cancer, can bring about a host of challenges for patients, particularly concerning jaw and neck tightness, lymphedema, difficulty breathing, and difficulty swallowing. Radiation can cause fibrosis (hardening) and tightening of the muscles around the jaw, making it difficult for patients to fully open their mouths (called Trismus). This can significantly impact oral hygiene, nutrition, and overall quality of life, as it may hinder chewing, speaking, and dental care. Radiation can also lead to fibrosis and scarring of the tissues in the neck area, resulting in stiffness and restricted movement. Patients may experience discomfort or pain when turning their heads, which can impede activities of daily living and contribute to feelings of frustration and immobility. Difficulty swallowing (called dysphagia) is a significant concern for patients undergoing radiation therapy for head and neck cancer. The radiation can damage the muscles and tissues involved in swallowing. Dysphagia not only affects eating, but also increases the risk of aspiration, pneumonia, and dehydration if left untreated. It can significantly impact a patient's ability to enjoy meals and socialize with others, leading to feelings of isolation.

Both surgery and radiation therapy can damage lymphatic function, which can lead to lymphedema, a condition of building up fluid in affected areas. During surgery, lymph nodes are often taken from the neck region to prevent spreading of cancer outside of the area. In addition, radiation therapy can cause hardening of the lymph nodes that can prohibit them from draining the fluid out of the head and neck. With lymphedema of the head and neck, the fluid build up can lead to difficulty swallowing, speaking, and deformity of the area. Unlike lymphedema of the arms and legs, which can often be covered by clothing, swelling in the face and neck is much more apparent.

Addressing these side effects early is key to regaining full function. As with most things, early detection and treatment is key to preventing loss of function and deformity. Getting evaluated by a Physical Therapist and Speech Pathologist is key to detecting and addressing issues that arise from treatment. Range of motion exercises, swallowing therapy, and manual techniques can help improve function and reduce the risk of complications.

**For more information, please call Jamie Cinotto, DPT, CWS, CLT-LANA, ONC, or Hashim Jaderanii, PTA, WCC, CLT, at Central Coast Lymphedema & Wound Center: 805.782.9300**

# Collaborations

Throughout the year the Hearst Cancer Resource Center partners with many local businesses and organizations as well as attends many outreach events to continue to grow a strong bond with the local community. The value of these relationships proves to be vital in terms of collaboration, networking, and getting the word out about the supportive programs that the HCRC has to offer.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with groups and companies who understand the importance of what we do in San Luis Obispo County. With community support, the Hearst Cancer Resource Center has been able to add versatile programs and funding that are so vital to our mission and our people. If you or your organization would like to collaborate with HCRC either to raise funds or to support patients and families affected by cancer in a new way, please reach out to us at 805.542.6234.

**A big thank you to the people who support our work through these community fundraisers!**



## Cal Poly Baseball Game Changer Fundraiser with Pacific Premier Bank: Final Amount Raised \$1,920

Left to right: Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN, Nurse Navigator; Brooks Wise, Pacific Premier Bank; Ramie Castilleja, Program Coordinator



## SLO Blues Baseball— First Pitch Throw

Left to right: Bob Voglin, Cancer Survivor; Nico Button, SLO Blues Catcher; Ramie Castilleja, Program Coordinator



## Staff Spotlight

**Ramie Castilleja**

Program Coordinator

*Q: How long have you worked at HCRC?*

I've been with the HCRC since February of 2022 and I'm usually the voice behind the phone whenever anyone calls into the center! I've spent a majority of my professional experience working in nonprofit and community based programs, so when I began my journey into the field of healthcare with the HCRC it was a perfect fit. I enjoy helping others and creating programs that improve the wellbeing of the community; being able to work with so many amazing people in this role is a true privilege.

*Q: Why is HCRC important to you and/or this community?*

The HCRC is truly a one-of-a-kind resource to this community and there's nowhere else like it. For being in a small area in California, the HCRC is providing incredible resources and support that isn't always available in larger cities. The passion that the whole team shares and the drive to do whatever we can to help those with a cancer diagnosis is a wonderful thing to share. I'm grateful to know that we get to connect with those who have received a cancer diagnosis and work together to provide the level of care and compassion that we do.

*Q: What is something personal that you enjoy and would like to share?*

I'm definitely always on the go and onto the next adventure! I'm about to complete my MBA which is very exciting. I enjoy spending time with my friends and my seven-month-old Golden Retriever Clifford. You can typically find me at local concerts, farmers markets, or enjoying the beautiful sunsets here on the coast.

# Turn to us for answers

## HEARST CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

1941 Johnson Avenue, Suite 201  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
805.542.6234  
Monday–Friday  
9AM–4:30PM  
[dignityhealth.org/hcrc](http://dignityhealth.org/hcrc)  
Please call for an appointment

**Thomas Spillane, MD**  
*Medical Director*

**Shannon D’Acquisto**  
*Director, Cancer Survivor*  
[HCRC@dignityhealth.org](mailto:HCRC@dignityhealth.org)

**Julie Neiggemann, RN, MSN, OCN**  
*Nurse Navigator*

**Ashley Hahn, MSW, LCSW**  
*Social Worker*

**Eloisa Medina**  
*Patient Navigator*  
805.786.6130—en español

**Angela Fissell, RD**  
*Registered Dietitian*

**Ramie Castilleja**  
*Program Coordinator*

**Lisa Steinbeck**  
*Cancer Registrar*

## IMAGING CENTERS

FHMC San Luis Diagnostic Center  
1100 Monterey Street, #210  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
805.542.9700

FHMC Women’s Health and  
Imaging Center  
1941 Johnson Ave., Suite 104  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
805.597.6700

## SLO ONCOLOGY & HEMATOLOGY HEALTH CENTER

715-B/C Tank Farm Road  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Direct: 805.543.5577

*Care Providers:*  
**Thomas Spillane, MD**  
*Medical Oncology Director of  
Clinical Trials*

**Gorgun Akpek, MD, MHS**  
**Robin DiBiase, NP, OCN**  
**Daniel Lewis, MD**  
**James Malone III, MD**  
**Lin Soe, MD**  
**Tim Soucek, PA**

## SLO INFUSION CENTER

715-B/C Tank Farm Road  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Direct: 805.786.6140  
Nurse Line: 805.786.6144

**Susan Diaz, RN, OCN**  
*Director*

## DIGNITY CANCER CARE CENTRAL COAST

Mission Hope Cancer Center  
1325 East Church Street, Suite 102  
Santa Maria, CA 93454  
805.219.HOPE (4673)

850 Fair Oaks Avenue  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
805.474.5300

**Kathleen Sullivan, PhD, RN**  
*Vice President, Post Acute Care and  
Health Services Operations*

## ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Dignity Health Home Health  
& Hospice  
800.549.9609

Palliative Care  
805.739.3950

## COASTAL CANCER PARTNERS

The Hearst Cancer Resource Center has partnered with these organizations to bring programs and activities to the community:

**17 Strong**  
[seventeenstrong.org](http://seventeenstrong.org)

**American Cancer Society**  
[cancer.org](http://cancer.org)

**Camp Kesem Cal Poly**  
[campkesem.org](http://campkesem.org)

**Cancer Connections**  
[cancerconnectionslo.org](http://cancerconnectionslo.org)

**Cancer Support Community**  
[cscslo.org](http://cscslo.org)

**Cancer Well-Fit Program**  
[cancerwell-fit.com](http://cancerwell-fit.com)

**Central Coast Dragon Boat Association—Central Coast SurviveOars**  
[ccdba.org](http://ccdba.org)

**DreamMakers SLO**  
[dreammakersslo.com](http://dreammakersslo.com)

**Hats for Hope**  
[hatsforhope.com](http://hatsforhope.com)

**Jack’s Helping Hand**  
[jackshelpinghand.org](http://jackshelpinghand.org)

**Leukemia and Lymphoma Society**  
[lls.org](http://lls.org)

**SabesWings**  
[SabesWings.org](http://SabesWings.org)

**Surfing for Hope**  
[surfingforhope.org](http://surfingforhope.org)

**Teddy Bear Foundation**  
[teddybearcancerfoundation.org](http://teddybearcancerfoundation.org)

## Hearst Cancer Resource Center

Mailing address:  
1911 Johnson Avenue,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Street address:  
1941 Johnson Avenue, Suite 201,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

### HCRC Advisory Committee

*French Hospital Medical Center*

**Sue Anderson**—  
INTERIM PRESIDENT AND CEO

**Julia Fogelson, MSN, RN**—CNE

**Tessa Espinoza**—CPO

**Thomas Vendegna, MD**—CMO

#### *Committee Members*

**Sandy Dunn**—CHAIR

**Gayle Cekada, MD**

**Edwin Hayashi, MD**

**Jack Hearst**

**Stephen Hearst**

**Stephen Hilty, MD**

**Robert Johnson, MD**

**Noreen Martin**

**Susan Minker, MD**

**Don Oberhelman**

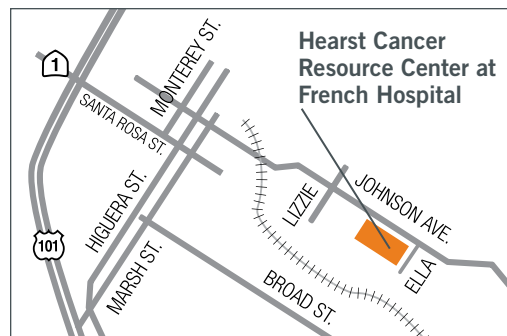
**Colleen Russell, DPT**

**Thomas Spillane, MD**

**Jackie Starr**

**Christine Williams**

## Hearst Cancer Resource Center



### Hearst Cancer Resource Center

*Commission on Cancer Community Cancer Program*

1911 Johnson Avenue  
San Luis Obispo, CA, 93401  
805.542.6234



A QUALITY PROGRAM  
of the AMERICAN COLLEGE  
OF SURGEONS

