

I CAN

NEWSLETTER

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FEATURE ARTICLE

QUALITY CANCER CARE WITHOUT COMPROMISE



Quality Cancer Care Without Compromise

Designing a Better Patient Experience

Hope. And help. That's what cancer care provides. A major initiative is underway at Texas Oncology to better deliver both to patients. The Oncology Care Model – created for Medicare patients receiving chemotherapy – is an innovative program designed to improve quality of care and the patient experience, while better managing resources.

Texas Oncology always has prioritized compassionate, personalized care. A series of small and significant changes underway add up to an important transformation that will result in more patient communication, engagement, and better outcomes for patients. Patients will notice specific ways their care teams are better coordinating care to address a variety of needs during and after treatment.

“We pioneered community-based care to provide cancer treatment close to patients’ homes, jobs and support systems without compromising quality. Just as we strive to develop treatment breakthroughs, we’re also passionate about improving how we plan each patient’s treatment and guide them through their cancer journey.”



Dr. Russell Hoverman
Vice President of Quality Programs,
Texas Oncology

Shared Decision Making

Your values and wishes matter, and you have an important say in your treatment. New patients have an in-depth conversation with their care team to discuss benefits and disadvantages of treatment options – including side effects and impacts on

quality of life. A written treatment plan provides clear descriptions of the agreed upon road ahead.

Patient Navigation

Cancer care is a complicated journey. Our care teams are communicating more frequently to guide each patient’s journey – including treatment, nutrition, and emotional screenings, chemotherapy education classes, survivorship planning, benefits counseling, and after hours support.

Patient Support

Helpful Services: Cancer treatment can impact quality of life and may create the need for additional services, including special help or supplies at home, assistance with self-care, emotional health, and language interpretation.

Maintaining Health: Maintaining a healthy diet during and after treatment can directly impact your overall wellness. Receiving and following guidance on exercise and nutrition specific to your cancer type and treatment can improve your care experience.

Advance Care Planning: It can be beneficial to have conversations about your values and wishes, should you become seriously ill. Making your preferences known early about the types of treatments you prefer can relieve much stress and anxiety for you and your family.

After Hours Support

Care teams are available 24/7 to answer questions, provide advice, and help patients avoid unnecessary emergency room visits. Experiencing new symptoms? Call Texas Oncology first, and we can help determine next steps (see sidebar).

Proactive Patient Communication

Texas Oncology care teams will communicate in more ways and more often – a guiding hand throughout your treatment and beyond. “I like

to be prepared for what I’m going to experience. The calls from nurse navigator Tammy help me know what’s ahead,” said Sue Patterson, breast cancer patient, Texas Oncology–Waco.

These enhancements reflect Texas Oncology’s focus on patients as people, not just their cancer. It’s redefining quality cancer care for improving medical outcomes and positive experiences for patients.

“We live in the same community as our patients, we see them every day, and they truly become part of our family. That’s not something every provider offers.”



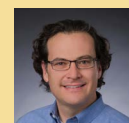
Dr. Vance Esler
Hematologist and Oncologist,
Texas Oncology–Amarillo Cancer Center



Oncology Care Model

Putting Patients at the Center

Texas Oncology was selected to participate in the Oncology Care Model (OCM), an innovative program from Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation designed to improve patient care and the cancer treatment experience. As OCM is implemented, all patients, not only Medicare patients, will notice a greater focus on communication that helps them better understand their illness and treatment, sets expectations regarding side effects, improves their understanding of test results, managing symptoms, and avoiding unnecessary hospital and emergency room visits.



“OCM aligns with Texas Oncology’s patient-centered, compassionate approach resulting in greater collaboration among physicians, and putting a greater emphasis on shared decision making with patients,” said Lalan Wilfong, M.D., medical director of quality programs and value-based care at Texas Oncology.

A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT



Your oncology care team guides you through all aspects of your treatment. Each plays an important role in surrounding you with support.



Physicians
Medical oncologist, radiation oncologist, surgeon
Overall care and treatment planning



Medical Assistants
Assist physicians and nurses, and introduce special programs to patients



Social Workers
Emotional support, self-care, and logistical resources



Advanced Practice Providers (APPs)
Nurse practitioners, physician assistants
Follow-up appointments, 1:1 chemotherapy education, advance care planning, and survivorship



Nurses
Care coordination and after-hours care



Other Team Members
Pharmacists, lab technicians



Patient Benefits Representatives
Insurance benefit counseling and patient assistance



More breakthroughs. More victories.®

A Hometown Cancer Breakthrough

You might not imagine an important new breakthrough in immunotherapy for ovarian cancer could be developed in Tyler or Bedford, but significant cancer research is taking place outside of academic research institutions. More community-based research, long a focus of Texas Oncology, is an important priority for former Vice President Joe Biden's 'Cancer Moonshot' initiative.

Texas Oncology enrolls about 2,000 patients annually in clinical trials, including Carol Houston, a Waco lung cancer patient who described her clinical trial experience:



Carol Houston
Lung cancer patient,
Texas Oncology-Waco

Inoperable stage IV lung cancer. A diagnosis I never expected, but it was my reality.

After starting chemo, Dr. Thomas Harris of Texas Oncology-Waco offered a clinical trial locally. It gave me access to a new medicine that interferes with the growth and spread of cancer cells. It had limited side effects and I'm now stable.

Receiving care close to home was very important to me. I live here. I work here. Participating in a clinical trial shouldn't require traveling across the state or country.

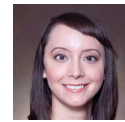
I have two children, five grandchildren, and one great grandchild. Texas Oncology gave me more opportunity to enjoy every second I can with them. ★

Continuing the Journey After Treatment

Fighting cancer is never easy. For some patients, completing the fight and transitioning from treatment to survivorship and a 'new normal' comes with challenges and uncertainty.

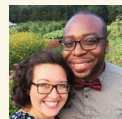
Texas Oncology's survivorship programs help patients traverse life after cancer. The program's goal is simple – empowerment.

“Everyone copes with cancer differently. The program provides a roadmap ahead because we're still in the journey together.”



Sabrina Mikan, Ph.D.
Director of Supportive Care Programs at Texas Oncology-Austin Central

After treatment ends, a care team member reviews the patient's care plan and discusses healthy lifestyle changes and monitoring health conditions; reconnects the patient with a primary care physician; and provides community resources for cancer survivors.



Mandi Mobley
Breast cancer survivor,
Texas Oncology-Austin Central

Initially, after my treatments ended, I felt great. About six months later, the anxiety and reality of it all knocked me off my feet. Texas Oncology connected me to the resources I needed after treatment. ★

We're Here for You 24/7

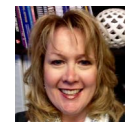
When it comes to cancer care, our team has seen it all, but we know you haven't. That's why we urge you to call us any time you have questions or experience new symptoms. You'll receive personalized care from a team that's familiar with your medical history and treatment plan. With 24/7 access, you can get the help you need and possibly avoid an emergency room or urgent care visit.

“Having this kind of round-the-clock support gave me a lot of confidence in my treatment and recovery. It's really set my mind at ease,” said Pamela Foster, lymphoma patient, Texas Oncology-Waco.

Patients receive a wallet card to reference when they are not sure if symptoms need care after hours or between appointments. If you experience any symptoms on the card, call us first. After-hours numbers are on the card and at www.TexasOncology.com.

We'll also follow up to ensure your recovery is on track.

“We're educating patients on what to look for and when to contact us. The goal is to ensure patients feel fully supported and mitigate costly emergency room visits.” ★



Holly Books, BSN, RN, OCN
Director of Nurses,
Texas Oncology

Know When to Call Us

It's important to call Texas Oncology before going to the emergency room or urgent care clinic, even if it is after hours. We may be able to assist in managing your symptoms, avoid an emergency room visit, and prevent complications.

Signs and symptoms to watch for:

- Chills or fever greater than 100.4
- Burning with urination, frequency, urgency, lower back pain (UTI)
- Productive cough, with green, yellow, red, brown sputum
- Unmanaged diarrhea, constipation, nausea, vomiting
- Unmanaged pain
- Swelling, redness, and pain on extremities
- Shortness of breath / chest pain
- Dizziness with changing position or lightheadedness
- Dark urine, less urine than normal, thirst, dry mouth (dehydration)
- Mouth sore, difficulty swallowing, frequent or severe heartburn (Mucositis)
- Severe fatigue ★

About Texas Oncology

As an independent oncology practice, Texas Oncology is comprised of more than 420 physicians and more than 175 sites of service throughout Texas and southeastern Oklahoma and is a pioneer in community-based cancer care. Patients are treated with today's most advanced, effective cancer technologies and treatments, and have the opportunity to take part in some of the most promising clinical trials in the nation for new drugs and treatments for a broad range of cancers, near the critical support of family and friends.

[Texas Breast Specialists](#), [Texas Oncology Surgical Specialists](#), [Texas Urology Specialists](#), and [Texas Center for Proton Therapy](#) are a part of [Texas Oncology](#).

Inside Texas Oncology

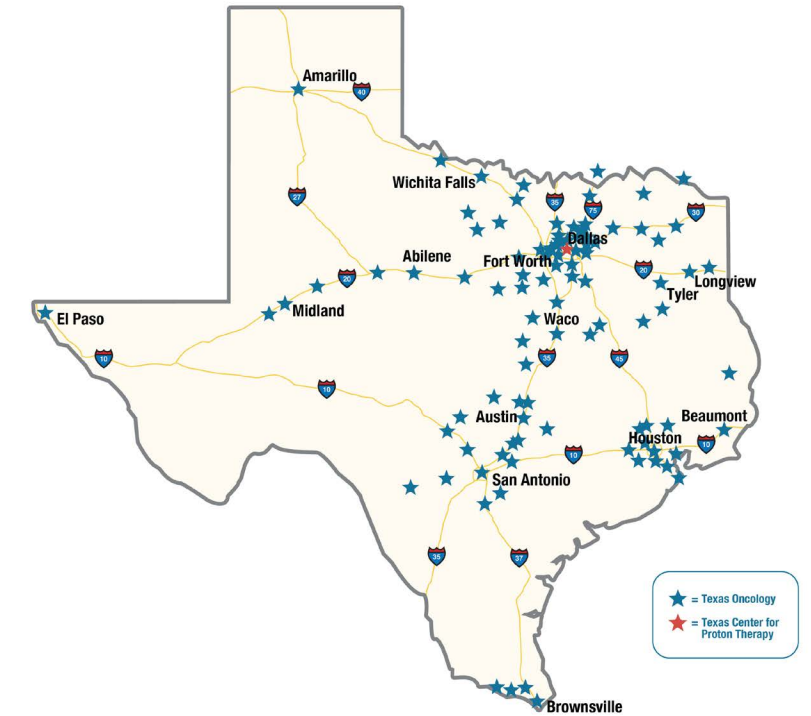
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Texas Oncology Turns 30



To our patients,

It started in 1986 with a new idea about how to treat cancer. Putting patients first meant bringing high-quality care to their communities, eliminating the need to travel for treatment. Thirty years later, we have a sense of accomplishment in pioneering community-based cancer care.

No matter where you live – big city, suburb, or small town – we offer advanced treatment, new technologies, clinical trials, and a compassionate approach. We get to know our patients and their loved ones because we work and live in their communities.

More than 420 physicians and a supporting team of more than 4,000 deliver nearly half of all cancer treatment in Texas. We see about 50,000 new patients annually, more than any other cancer provider in the state.

We've grown significantly, but remain true to our mission: bringing hope to patients throughout Texas, with community-based care focused on the whole patient, not just tumors.

Our patients are at the heart of every decision we make. You are the true heroes and our constant inspiration. We are thankful for your trust as we fight cancer together.



Sincerely,
Dr. Steven Paulson
President and Chairman,
Texas Oncology