

# SMMC now offers the full spectrum of breast cancer care

by Patricia Deisler, MD, Oncology



The opening of the SMMC Center for Breast Care is a remarkable move forward for SMMC's communities. We have been focused on bringing a total care package to the management of breast cancer. Now we have every piece in place where the patient can feel enveloped with reassuring care.

The team-oriented design of the Center for Breast Care enhances communication between the primary care physician, the radiologist, the surgeon, the medical oncologist and the radiation oncologist – all with the patient at the center of the care circle. Care is managed by Helene Langely, RN, SMMC's new patient navigator, who is the cornerstone of our breast cancer care. Helene reinforces and amplifies the connection between the medical staff and the patient; this allows us to provide ongoing care and counseling support to patients that is focused on all aspects of their well-being.

Today, breast cancer patients are living longer with improved results from diagnostics, surgery and oncology, and oncology care is being perfected every day. There is more hope now than ever for breast

cancer patients. In the past 20 years the mortality of breast cancer has been decreasing in the U.S. At SMMC we have integrated all aspects of the latest breast care treatments in one location while developing an overall care plan that includes ongoing care after recovery.

We are able to provide top of the line NCCN guidelines-based oncologic care at SMMC through our partnership with the Maine Center for Cancer Medicine (MCCM) and the Cancer Care Center of York County. There is no longer a "one-size-fits-all" approach to cancer treatment. Even among patients with the same type of cancer, the behavior of the cancer and its response to treatment can vary widely. By exploring the reasons for this variation, researchers have begun to pave the way for more personalized cancer treatment. It is becoming increasingly clear that specific characteristics of cancer cells and cancer patients can have a profound impact on prognosis and treatment outcome. Although factoring these characteristics into treatment decisions makes cancer care more complex, it also offers the promise of improved outcomes.

For every woman diagnosed with breast cancer, survivorship begins from day one. And with the establishment of the SMMC Center for Breast Care, we are offering one of the very best tools for survival: hope.

## Women told us what they want. We listened.

When women receive a breast cancer diagnosis, what do they look for in the care they receive? In February and March of this year we asked women who had been treated for breast cancer at several hospitals over the past 20 years to share their preferences in two SMMC focus groups.

Their interests were clear. Women want physical as well as emotional support by empathetic, caring, competent health care providers. As they navigate the complex process of treatment they want a personal guide. They also want simple step-by-step information on the treatment process. One issue that consistently arose in conversations was confusion over who was the lead physician at any single step in their care.

The preferences among focus group participants included:

- Coordinated care, prompt services, respect, and more one-on-one attention;

- A relaxed, private, comfortable atmosphere for family members and companions;
- They want to have a "say" in their care;
- They don't want to be rushed into a decision or left out of the decision-making process;
- They want their caregivers to take time to listen to them and their family members.
- They want resources when they're ready to accept them. For some, too much information too early in their treatment was frightening. Their interest focused on a website with information on cancer medications, clinical trials, reconstruction, exercise, post-op ergonomics and post-op sexuality. They also suggested pre- and post-op support groups.

What do women want as they journey through the breast care process? A great health care team offering reassurance, a hand to hold, and hope.



# Colleague

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## SMMC Center for Breast Care launched



I am pleased to announce the creation of the SMMC Center for Breast Care. We have gathered together an exceptional team of breast care experts supported by the latest in diagnostic technology, to assure your patients the best of breast care close to home.

The breast care team starts with the patient's primary care physician. Our other team members facilitate your patients' care, on your behalf, on the journey through diagnosis, surgery, treatment and survivorship. Centrally located breast care services and the availability of our electronic medical record help make that possible.

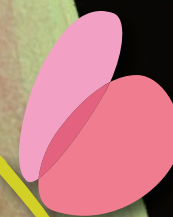
Survivorship begins at diagnosis; so it's important that we treat breast cancer as an emergency – compacting the diagnostic and care timeline and being responsive to the patient's physical and emotional needs. Everyone on the SMMC breast care team is focused on that goal, including:

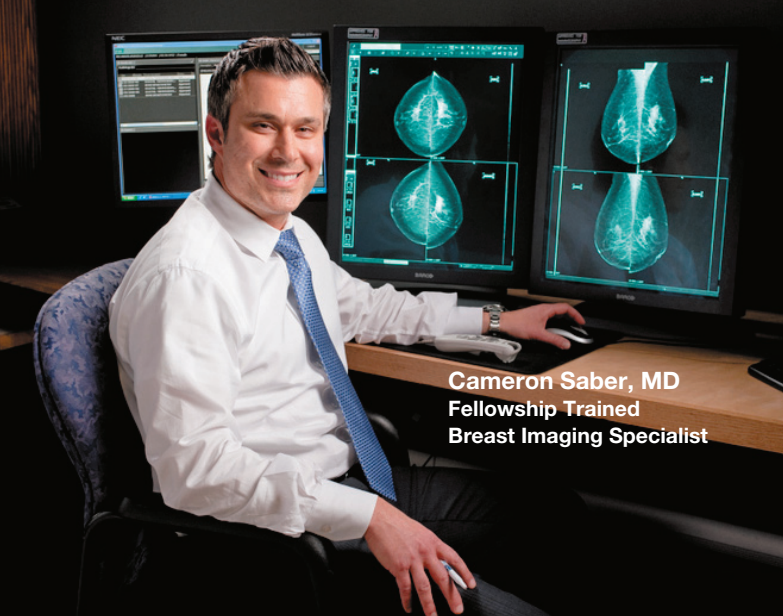
- Cameron Saber, MD, Fellowship trained breast imaging specialist -- who is dedicated to SMMC's breast care patients, full-time;
- Catherine Share, MD, breast care surgical specialist – has performed more breast cancer surgery with better clinical and aesthetic outcomes than other surgeons in our area focused on breast surgery.
- Patricia Diesler, MD, and Can Ilyas, MD -- bring their considerable oncology expertise to our team as well as the resources of the Maine Center for Cancer Medicine, Northern New England's largest oncology group.
- Helene Langley, RN, BS, CBPN-IC, Certified Nurse Patient Navigator – her sole mission is to fully support your patients and be their point person for questions and assistance.

The SMMC Center for Breast Care is ready, willing and able to provide the best possible care for the women of our community.

Ed McGeachey  
President & CEO

smmc center for  
breast  
care





**Cameron Saber, MD**  
Fellowship Trained  
Breast Imaging Specialist

## SMMC Center for Breast Care: Quality imaging and expertise offers reassuring care

by Cameron Saber, MD, Radiology, Breast Imaging

SMMC's commitment to providing the very best breast cancer care is evident in the on-site availability of leading edge breast imaging technologies and the hospital's close partnership with Spectrum Medical Group, Maine's largest multi-specialty, physician owned and directed organization with over 150 physicians practicing in the areas of anesthesiology, pain management, pathology, radiology, and radiation therapy.

In setting the foundation for providing advanced breast care close to home, SMMC features breast imaging technologies that ensure our medical team has the tools at hand to provide reassuring care for patients who prefer care closer to where they live:

- Digital screening and digital diagnostic mammography;
- Breast ultrasound and breast MRI as well as nuclear medicine sentinel node injections;
- Imaging guided breast biopsies including stereotactic biopsies, ultrasound-guided biopsies as well as needle wire localizations.

In addition, patients need personal support and guidance.

### I meet directly with patients who are asked to return for additional imaging following screening mammograms.

I also meet with patients that are referred to SMMC for imaging of clinical areas of concern. As a fellowship-trained breast-imaging specialist, I feel that it is of particular importance that women have an opportunity to fully understand their care, including test results and our recommendations. They need to be able to receive timely answers to their questions directly from the team that's providing the care. Finally, our Patient Navigator -- Helene Langley, RN -- is a nurse specialist certified in helping patients understand their diagnosis and navigate through the treatment process.

With our technology, expertise, and personal patient care, I am confident that SMMC's Center for Breast Care provides outstanding care that is medically advanced and personally compassionate.

## SMMC Center for Breast Care offers expertise in surgical care

by Catherine Share, MD, Breast Care Surgical Specialist



**Catherine Share, MD**

With the opening of the SMMC Center for Breast Care, the hospital has made a significant commitment to our communities to provide women with the most up-to-date breast care that is timely, compassionate, and close to home. State-of-the-art digital mammography, stereotactic mammographically-guided breast biopsy equipment, high quality ultrasound and new Breast MRI round out the technological sophistication of the Center. But these modalities of service would be incomplete without excellent surgical care that is timely, compassionate, and consistent with the highest standard. That care is available at the SMMC Center for Breast Care.

I have been a practicing general surgeon for 20 years and a large portion of my practice is devoted to breast care, for both benign and malignant disease. Beyond a commitment to excellent surgical care, the care of the patient with breast disease must include familiarity with the total treatment program:

- timely diagnosis;
- ongoing clinical trials;
- chemotherapy regimens;
- surgery;
- reconstruction; and
- survivorship.

The SMMC Center for Breast Care features all this and more.

Surgery for breast cancer has evolved from radical procedures that leave deforming scars to less invasive techniques that provide excellent cancer treatment as well as acceptable cosmetic results. Some examples:

- With neoadjuvant chemotherapy, large tumors are reduced in size.
- Women who once were only candidates for mastectomy are now able to receive lumpectomies followed by radiation therapy.
- Sentinel node biopsy techniques allow surgeons to determine if a breast cancer has spread to the axilla without performing a complete axillary node dissection. This spares women potentially unnecessary surgery, post-operative pain, and long-term side effects in the form of lymphedema.

When you have a patient that needs breast care, you can comfortably turn to the SMMC Center for Breast Care knowing that your patient will receive state-of-the-art care. From surgery to an outstanding team of medical and radiation oncologists, pathologists, radiologists, and nurses who work collaboratively with the Maine Center for Cancer Medicine, the SMMC Center for Breast Care offers a multi-disciplinary approach to cancer care right here at SMMC, close to where your patients live.

I invite you to call me at **207-284-4597** if I can answer any questions.

## The Nurse Patient Navigator: Guiding women through the breast care experience

by Helene Langley, RN, BS, CBPN-IC, Certified Nurse Patient Navigator for Breast Care

I have been privileged to join a team of outstanding breast care professionals who aim to provide the highest quality, innovative, and compassionate breast care to the women of this community.

As SMMC's first breast patient navigator, my role is to guide women through the anxiety of uncertain breast health issues. Whether these concerns originate with a lump felt by a woman or her physician or from a suspicious finding as a result of a screening mammogram, the navigator:

- supports the patient through diagnostic tests and ensures a timely delivery of care;
- serves as the "go to" person for communication with healthcare team members;
- assures that every patient receives the best standard of breast care compassionately and efficiently;
- ensures that the ideal breast cancer experience does not stop with the navigator but extends through her interaction with mammographers, radiologists, pathologists, breast surgeons, plastic surgeons, medical oncologists and radiation oncologists.

If a positive diagnosis of breast cancer should occur, the patient has already developed a relationship with the navigator; this forms a trusted foundation for ongoing care, ensuring that the patient feels supported immediately and throughout her upcoming breast cancer treatment experience.

Providing education, scheduling meetings, managing referrals and providing emotional support are critical for women during these uncertain times and the ongoing assistance of a patient navigator can make the experience of breast cancer manageable for women. In a healthcare environment that is becoming increasingly complex, the navigator helps make sense of the multiple players involved in the care experience while reducing any gaps in care.

My goal is to ensure that every breast care patient who turns to SMMC for help completes her care knowing that she has experienced the very best in breast care delivered with compassion and respect.



**Helene Langley, RN, BS, CBPN-IC**  
Certified Nurse Patient Navigator  
for Breast Care

## Steps in the treatments of Breast Cancer Care

