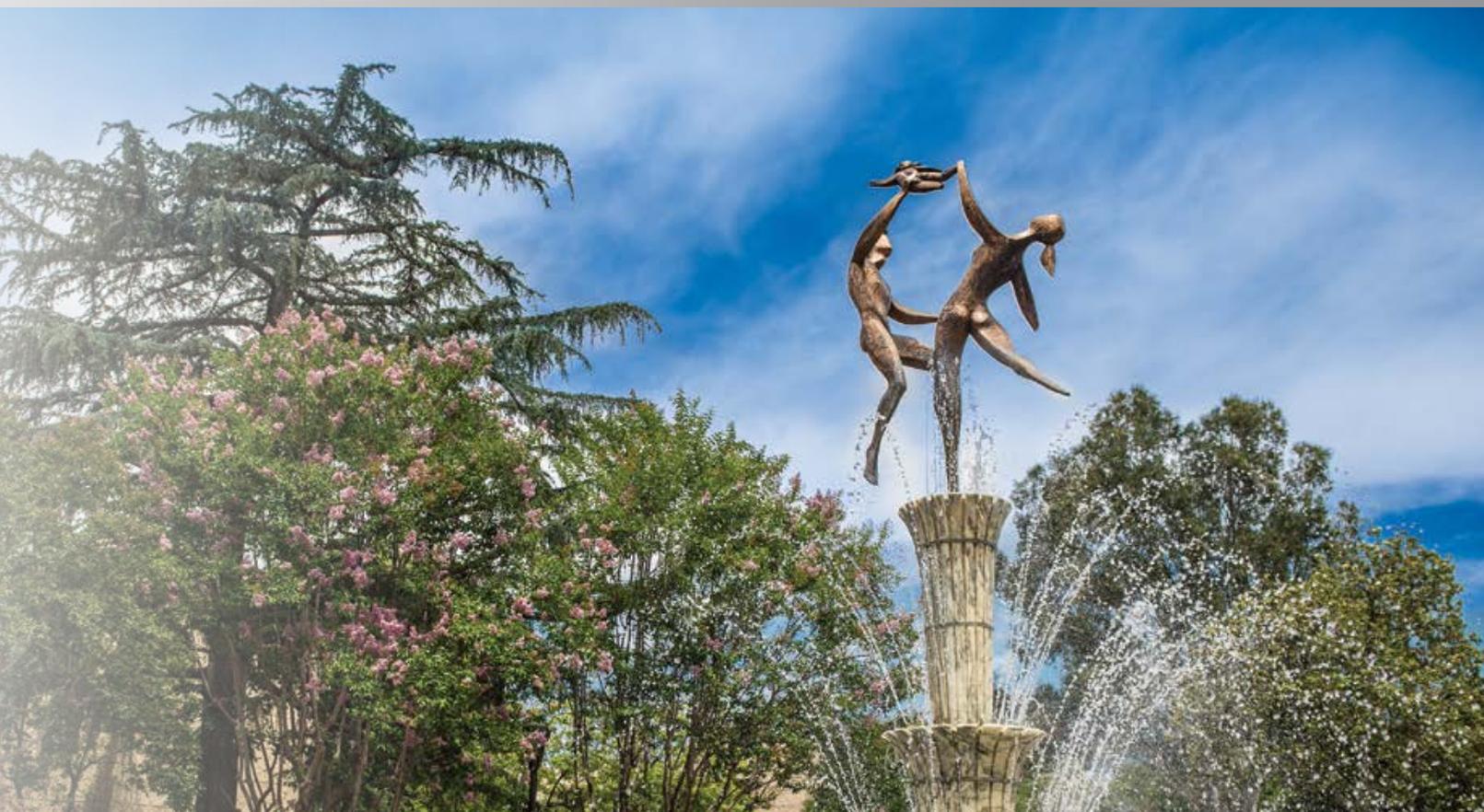


*“Once I began to understand the individual roles of the medical staff, I realized it was such a comfort to me.”*

— BMT Survivor

## CHAPTER 2



**Your Health Care Team**



# Chapter 2

## Your Health Care Team

City of Hope's team approach to treatment has long set us apart from other hospitals and cancer centers. Each patient is treated by a team of caregivers whose goal is to provide the most complete and well managed treatment possible.

### **Doctor (Physician)**

As the leader of your medical care team, your doctor is an expert in the field of hematology and blood and marrow transplantation. This is a field that focuses on providing patients with care that is the most advanced possible. His/her skill is balanced by compassion and concern for your emotional and physical needs.

Our doctors work in association with a network of doctors and other health care professionals that include members of City of Hope's Department of Hematology & Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation (HCT), community doctors, doctors and researchers who work within cancer centers, and government-supported medical organizations throughout the country.

### **Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant**

The nurse practitioner (NP) or physician assistant (PA) of the hematology/HCT team is a clinician who has had additional advanced training in hematology and blood and marrow transplantation. The NP or PA makes daily rounds with your health care team and helps to manage daily needs in collaboration with your doctor.

The NP or PA has been trained to perform some or all of the following procedures: bone marrow harvests, bone marrow aspirations, bone marrow biopsies, lumbar punctures and skin biopsies. The NP or PA works with individual doctors and will be available to provide care for you in the inpatient and outpatient setting.

### **Nurse Coordinator**

Your nurse coordinator will play a leading role in preparing you for your transplant. He/she is an expert in cancer therapy and is responsible for organizing most of the tests/procedures that will take place before you are admitted to the hospital. In most cases, your nurse coordinator will be involved in your first evaluation process and will help to answer any questions you may have.

### **Nurse**

City of Hope has a large staff of experienced and dedicated nurses. They are specialists in all areas of patient care and will work to make you as comfortable as possible during your hospital stay. Over the course of your hospital stay, you will become familiar with various nurses who are highly trained in the care of pediatric and adult blood or marrow

transplantation patients. These nurses work under the guidance of your doctor and work closely with all the members of the transplant team.

## **Case Manager**

The case manager, often called “discharge planner,” coordinates home care services you may need after discharge from the hospital. Your Case Manager works closely with your doctor to create a treatment plan that meets all of your health care needs and to assure that you safely transition from hospital to home.

## **Child Life Specialist**

The child life specialist provides age appropriate education about HCT transplant, disease, procedures and treatments for pediatric transplant patients, siblings and children of adult patients ages 4 to 17 years. Child life specialists provide one-on-one therapeutic interactions with pediatric transplant patients once they are in isolation.

## **School Program Coordinator**

City of Hope believes that children, teens and young adults adjust better to the hospital setting by starting hospital instruction as soon as possible. Our school program coordinator meets with patients and parents in the first few days of admission to assess for educational needs and to arrange tutoring. Tutoring is coordinated to meet the patient’s medical, emotional and educational needs. Tutoring sessions provide patients with daily routine and educational activities that complement their primary focus on treatment while hospitalized.

## **Clinical Social Worker**

Clinical social workers are an important part of your health care team. Every patient at City of Hope is assigned a social worker. We know that stress often can occur with a serious or long-term illness for both patients and loved ones. You will meet with one of our clinical social workers during or soon after your first visit to City of Hope. Your clinical social worker will also be able to answer any nonmedical questions you may have.

During your treatment, your clinical social worker will monitor what effect your treatment is having on your emotional and social well-being. He/she will also be available to give you and your loved ones the support you may need. This can include counseling, financial resource referrals, community resource referrals and support group information. The Clinical Social Work Department is also able to arrange for interpretive services if you or your family members require them.

To help you during your stay at City of Hope and to help you prepare for your return home, your clinical social worker will talk often with your doctor, nurses, therapist and other members of your health care team. All communications, of course, are confidential.

## Clinical Psychologist and Psychiatrist

Following your diagnosis, and during your transplant, you may find yourself feeling anxious, sad, angry, hopeless or even helpless. City of Hope has clinical psychologists on staff to assist you to cope and adapt throughout your hospital stay and transplant. The clinical psychologist will be available to meet with you before, during and/or after your treatment, following a referral from your doctor.

If you become depressed or anxious, your doctor may make a referral to the consulting psychiatrist for an evaluation. The psychiatrist, psychologist and social workers all work together to ensure that your needs are met. There are also a number of support groups available to you at City of Hope to help you after you leave the hospital.

## Dietitian

Dietitians will be available to assess your eating habits and then give you information regarding food and nutrition. Your dietitian will discuss important food safety guidelines to be followed during and after your hospital stay. Your dietitian will also help you with ongoing nutrition guidelines once you are ready to make the transition to home.

## Rehabilitation Treatment Team

Because remaining active is a crucial part of your transplant process, City of Hope is a STAR Certified\* institution and has specially trained oncology rehabilitation therapists who will work with you. Evidence suggests that exercise and activity help people recover more quickly, reduce stress and anxiety, reduce nausea, reduce fatigue, help with sleep and reduce the risk of complications such as blood clots, pneumonia, weakness and depression. (See *Top Ten Things We Want You to Know About Rehab* handout.) The therapists will work with you to develop a plan specific to your needs. (See *Rehab Weekly Activity Schedule*.) The goals of this plan are to help you maintain your physical, cognitive and leisure/social functioning to the best of your ability while undergoing the transplant, and to return to your prior level of engagement in your chosen and required activities as soon as possible following your discharge from the hospital.

The rehabilitation team is made of up physical therapists, occupational therapists and recreation therapists, each specializing in a particular part of your rehabilitation process described below:

**Physical therapists** will review and monitor your physical condition and teach you appropriate exercise. They will work with you to set up a plan to help you stay as strong as possible throughout your treatment and show you how to change your plan as your tolerance for activity changes. When you are ready to be discharged from the hospital, they will help you design a plan to continue to build your strength and endurance on your road to recovery.

**Occupational therapists** will assess and monitor your ability to perform your activities of daily living (ADLs). ADLs can be activities as simple as dressing or bathing, or activities

that are more complex such as computer use or event planning — anything that you find meaningful that will keep you active. They will work with you if you feel you are experiencing any chemotherapy-related cognitive impairments, such as difficulty concentrating and/or forgetfulness, and they can help you with coping/anxiety reduction strategies as well. They will help you make a plan to address any of your concerns about responsibilities, roles, cognitive issues or coping strategies when you are ready to be discharged.

**Recreation therapists** will evaluate your interests and hobbies and your adjustment to the hospital environment and they will work with you to develop a plan to keep you actively engaged during your time in the hospital. They will provide you with opportunity for social engagement with other patients as well as for one-on-one time with the therapists. You may participate in your current interests and hobbies or you may learn new leisure skills. They will help you plan for your discharge by providing leisure counseling to address how you will engage in social/leisure activity once you return home.

Your rehabilitation team will be there every step of the way to coach you, guide you, advise you, motivate you, cheer for you and laugh with you. Ultimately, your success in rehabilitation depends on YOU!

## Patient Advocate

A patient representative is available to you during your stay at City of Hope and can help you find a satisfactory solution to any concerns or unmet needs you may have. Our goal is to ensure that your time at City of Hope is as safe, effective and comfortable as possible. If you or your family have any questions or concerns during your stay at City of Hope, you can reach your patient representative by calling the Patient Advocacy Office at 626-256-HOPE (4673), ext. 62285.

