

# THE SPECIALIST

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

## My Friends,

As the year winds down, I am thankful for a fulfilling year and a joyous holiday season. Although I know that many await a new year and fresh start, I find myself feeling proud and humbled by the incredible things we've accomplished this year. It has been a great year, and we know that your continuous hard work makes it all possible.

Together, we have built on our collective strengths. We have solidified foundations for the future and energized transformation and innovation. Our success is strongly related to our teams and leadership's dedication. This year, we've had exciting promotions across the board, including executive leaders Todd O'Connell's appointment to President and Nicole Gregory to Chief Operations Officer. In addition, we recently welcomed Chief Financial Officer Rich McMullen to our company and named Tina Toulon Executive Director of the New York Cancer Foundation.

Our strategic partnerships have increased our ability to expand access to high-quality care to our patients and our employees as well. For example, our collaboration with Catholic Health and our ability to offer in-house services at an excellent rate has provided tremendous cost savings for our staff as part of our domestic network.

Of course, with the holidays approaching, we look forward to our annual office decorating contest, showcasing our teamwork and creative spirit. And in the spirit of giving, we work towards raising funds for our "Adopt-A-Family" tradition to provide holiday meals and gifts to our patients and their loved ones.

By approaching everything we do with a mindset of how we could better be of service, we can give our patients and our communities what they need most: world-class care, close to home.

From all of us at NYCBS, I wish you a happy and healthy New Year!

Warm regards,

**Dr. V**



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# HOPE

## FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season brings mixed feelings of joy and sadness. For patients or caregivers dealing with a cancer diagnosis or a chronic illness, feelings may be magnified. This time of the year can be overwhelming for our patients, especially when surrounded by others planning and celebrating the holiday season. No matter what you celebrate, the focus is centered around the spirit of family and friends.

Our patients who are nearing the end of life are especially vulnerable at this time of year. For caregivers, it is difficult to witness their loved ones who are ill, especially during a time that is typically reserved for being filled with holiday cheer. Focus on spending quality time together, cherish those moments with your loved ones, create memories that will bring smiles and laughter in years to come, and most importantly, do not stress over what is supposed to be after a beautiful time together.

Palliative care is centered around helping patients manage distressing or troubling symptoms to improve overall quality of life, decrease symptom burden, and alleviate stress.

### So how can we help our patients and families cope during the holiday season?

#### We can remind them of some of these tips:

- Focusing on creating memories that will bring joy and laughter to both patients and caregivers.
- Forgive yourself, and give yourself permission to do things differently, normal routines can be modified
- Be accepting of help if it is offered or know it is ok to ask loved ones for help if you need it
- Do not put too many expectations on yourself. Pace yourself and set limits
- Do something that makes you feel good
- Create a scrapbook of memories
- Write a journal about life experiences
- Capture photographs or videos
- Watch a holiday movie, have your favorite warm drink
- Always have hope, hope of a good day or even a good moment in the light of illness

*The true meaning of the holidays are not the gifts we receive or the objects we obtain, it is the emotion we remember most. Remember that spending time together is the most precious gift of all. Make the most of the time you have by creating memories that will last a lifetime and remind our patients that we at NYCBS will always be a resource of support and strength not only throughout the holiday season but all year long!*



# The Holiday Gift Giving Guide For Cancer Patients That Anyone Would Love

*The season of giving is upon us. If you're searching for a gift for someone battling cancer, we've got you covered! We know it can be challenging this time of year to find the right gift, especially for someone you care about who is undergoing treatment. In our family, you're not alone, so we put together a list of ideas to make your shopping a bit more joyful. These gifts are sure to bring smiles and holiday cheer.*

**HEPA Filter Air Purifier with a No-Ozone UV Light:** Patients undergoing chemotherapy treatments have weakened immune systems. A quality HEPA air purifier / HEPA air cleaner with a non-ozone producing (UV) ultraviolet light system will remove viruses, bacteria, mold, and fungi pathogens from the air that could cause infection.

**Cool Air Humidifier:** Xerostomia (dry mouth)/thick saliva is a side effect of some chemotherapies - using a cool-mist humidifier at home will help moisten the air.

**Cozy Throw Blankets:** Give a warm hug that's COVID safe. Throw blankets will not only keep your loved ones warm during the long days of winter but will also cozy-up their living space. They also make great gifts to bring to treatment. Infusion centers are always cold, and while they do have blankets for patients, it's nice to have your own. You can even have them personalized with pictures.

**Portable, handheld gaming devices:** A portable, handheld gaming device is a great way to pass the time for the gamer in your life who's sidelined by treatment or surgery. Playing video games serves as a distraction and may exercise their brain and help them combat confusion, memory loss, and other treatment-related side effects. The more immersive the game, the better.

**Books & Fancy Pens/Pencils & Highlighters:** Snuggling up with a good book provides comfort, inspiration, and support. Novels, adult coloring books, journals, planners, and inspirational books are all great ideas. Reading and writing serve as therapeutic tools, while a planner can help them map out a schedule and their goals for the week, in addition to writing down any medical appointments or reminders.

**Cookbooks:** Can help patients navigate their dietary needs and create wholesome meals at home they will love. Our nutritionist loves Holly Clegg's Eating Well Through Cancer - The recipes are easy to follow and the book offers some good tips (side effect specific) as well.

**8 Pocket Expanding Document File Folders Organizer:** This is a great gift to give to someone for their first appointment at NYCBS. He/She will meet with multiple practitioners (Doctor, Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Unit Coordinator, Nutritionist, Social Worker, etc.) and get a lot of information. This will help someone organize all pertinent materials (handouts, pamphlets, etc.) and feel less overwhelmed.

**Assorted flavors of anti-nausea lozenges** (green tea with lemon, ginger, banana). Nausea and vomiting are some of the worst of many horrible chemo side effects. Queasy Drops or Tummy Drops are good to have on hand should a wave of nausea overtake them. Keep in mind that these should be considered in addition to and not instead of prescription antiemetic (anti-nausea) medication for anyone experiencing these chemo-induced side effects.

**High-quality Blender:** Sometimes, cancer patients just won't feel like eating. A blender can help prepare simple, delicious smoothies, so they never forgo nourishment. Any type is fine - whether it's a Vitamix or a single-serving Ninja Bullet.

Nutrition impact symptoms such as decreased appetite, early satiety, taste changes, amongst others, can prevent cancer patients from getting all the calories, protein, and other nutrients they need during treatment. Many patients have an easier time drinking their calories - smoothies are a great way to help optimize nutrition and can be custom-made to each person's preference (milkshake, juice) and nutrient needs.

**Indoor vegetable or herb plants:** With a cancer diagnosis, one loses a sense of control; growing a plant will help one gain back some sense of control by being the nurturer. And then you can share and eat the fruits of your labor.

#### **A Basket of Kitchen Gadgets:**

- Grippers (especially helpful if a patient has neuropathy).
- Gloves (with grips) - patients on chemotherapy treatment Oxaliplatin have to be cautious and avoid anything cold.
- Nice set of oven mitts - with grippers as well.
- Electric can opener - helpful if the patient has decreased hand strength.
- Food thermometer is a small, handy gadget that tests the doneness of meat, poultry, and fish so you don't have to cut into the food! Food safety precautions are important for everyone, but even more so for cancer patients who are likely to be immunocompromised.

**Glass meal prep storage containers** in various sizes. Fatigue is a common symptom of cancer treatments. Make-ahead meals to have tasty grab-and-go options in the refrigerator or freezer helps. See-through containers serve as a visual reminder of what foods you have close at hand.

**Cute "bag or cooler bag"** to pack drinks and snacks in for chemo days.

**32oz insulated water bottle:** Make daily water intake simple and cute. Insulated water bottles are one of those trends that are totally worth it!! They keep beverages at a consistent temperature and are completely durable. Many cancer patients run the risk of dehydration; having a visual around serves as a reminder to drink.

**Small, handheld weights (e.g., 2, 3, or 4 pounds) and stretch bands** can help with in-home strength-training. It is imperative to maintain lean muscle mass during cancer treatment. It helps with immune function, ability to tolerate treatment, overall quality of life, etc.

**Hat, Scarf, or Compression Socks:** These can all be super stylish and help patients feel more comfortable. Compression socks will also help with leg swelling.

**Gift cards:** Think food delivery, hair salon, grocery services, rideshare apps, like uber—options that can ease the patient's burden. Traveling to and from home for cancer treatments can be time-consuming and tiring for both the patient and caregiver. A nice idea for a group of people looking to chip in - A "meal service delivery" for a certain amount of time (e.g., duration of treatment) or a gift card to their favorite restaurant can take away the burden of having to grocery shop and cook.

**Firewood:** If they have a fireplace or fire pit, firewood is a great gift to warm up their body and soul.

**Being present:** What better gift than the gift of time. Sometimes all a patient needs is someone to listen and offer advice or tell them what to do or how to do it.



## Anthony Peterson

### Promoted to Vice President of Business Development for New York Cancer & Blood Specialists

**Anthony Peterson has been promoted from Regional Director to Vice President of Business Development. Peterson will develop, manage and direct the execution of business development with a primary focus on identifying and driving strategic partnerships and key business opportunities.**

He will work closely under the direction of OneOncology's Chief Development Officer Jimmy Harper and Vice President of Development Henry Varnell to cultivate and strengthen relationships and growth at a national level.

"Anthony's appointment supports our efforts to create an organization that delivers value to our partners, patients, and the community," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO of NYCBS. "His ability to embrace change and think innovatively will help drive the organization towards improved outcomes, helping make a difference for healthcare providers and patients alike. I'm confident he will drive the next stage of business growth for NYCBS."

Peterson has been with NYCBS for over four years and has held many different positions. From front desk receptionist, supervisor, unit coordinator, executive assistant, to regional director, Anthony is well versed in patient care and operational needs. Anthony loves to embrace new opportunities and challenges.

"I'm excited and grateful to assume the role of Vice President of Business Development," said Peterson. "Being promoted within the Company is a true testament to NYCBS' proven approach to diversity and leadership talent development, succession, and deployment. I look forward to aligning our business development efforts with our strategic direction and execution."

## NYCBS Announces **Dr. Tarek Elrafei** as Associate Professor of Medicine

**Dr. Tarek Elrafei has been promoted to Associate Professor of Medicine in Hematology and Medical Oncology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Dr. Elrafei is a practicing hematologist-oncologist focusing on various benign and malignant hematologic conditions and solid tumors at NYCBS's Eastchester Center For Cancer Care located at 2330 Eastchester Road, Bronx, NY 10469.**

"We are so proud of Dr. Elrafei's above and beyond efforts," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO of NYCBS. "At NYCBS, we stress the importance of continued education and clinical research to ensure we're not only delivering the best care for today but making discoveries for a better tomorrow."

Previously, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Dr. Elrafei's promotion to Associate Professor demonstrates his commitment to enhancing patient care and education. The rigorous consideration required a teaching portfolio, 12 letters of recommendation, information regarding his contributions to the academic goals of the College of Medicine, and a research, teaching, clinical and administrative activities assessment.

"I would like to thank Dr. Jeff Vacirca for continuing to encourage the pursuit of academic activities," Dr. Elrafei said. "It would not have been possible to start a new fellowship, run weekly tumor boards, give lectures, and precept Hematology-Oncology fellows, while also meeting the demands of partnership without his support and the support of NYCBS partners and Nurse Practitioners. I have the best of both worlds, and I am very grateful."

Dr. Elrafei is an Attending Physician at Montefiore and Jacobi Medical Center. He has many leadership roles, including Chief of Hematology/Medical Oncology Division, Cancer Committee Chairman, and past Associate Fellowship Director. Dr. Elrafei has co-authored many scientific articles and has presented at national meetings, including the American Society of Hematology, the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology. He received his D.O. from Nova Southeastern University, completed a medical residency at Beth Israel Medical Center, and fellowship at Montefiore Medical Center.





## Rich McMullen

announced as Chief Financial Officer for New York Cancer & Blood Specialists

**New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS), one of the Nation's leading oncology practices, announces Rich McMullen, CPA, CMA, CSCA, CHFP, MBA, as Chief Financial Officer. McMullen will help facilitate organizational goals and manage financial performance.**

"We are so excited to have Rich on board our leadership team," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO. "His financial experience and deep understanding of our business will align him and NYCBS for continued success."

McMullen is a business-focused financial leader with over 18 years of experience optimizing operations. He previously served as Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer at ProHEALTH Care.

"Rich's impressive background makes him a great fit for his new role at NYCBS," said Todd O'Connell, President. "We welcome him to our team and look forward to his contributions."

McMullen obtained a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Business in Administration and Corporate Finance from the IE Business School in Spain.

"I'm excited to join the talented NYCBS team dedicated to providing patients with world-class care," said McMullen. "As someone with a family history of cancer, our mission hits very close to home."

McMullen enjoys spending time with his wife and three daughters, reading, and hiking in his free time.

CELEBRATING

# 41 YEARS

AT NEW YORK CANCER & BLOOD SPECIALISTS

**Patricia (Patti) O'Donnell, also nicknamed "Nana," started her career as a medical technologist in 1980. At the time, New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS) was North Shore Hematology Oncology Associates and had only two locations: Port Jefferson and Smithtown.**

Patti started in the chemistry department with only three people and remembered when everything was manual, including pipetting, reagents, and charting.

"It has been unbelievable to see the company grow and be part of it," she said. "I made some fantastic friends and still keep in touch with the girls from the original crew."

As the company grew and the technology advanced, Patti adapted. "I'm happy here. I love the atmosphere, and everyone works well together," she said.

Patti and her colleagues in the lab always help each other. Her years of experience and their knowledge of technology make for something interesting to learn every day. Patti likes working in chemistry and troubleshooting. She works a few days a week now, and in her free time, enjoys gardening and spending time with her grandchildren.







## Tarun Wasil, MD

### Joins New York Cancer & Blood Specialists in Lake Success

**Dr. Wasil is an eminent hematologist-oncologist with years of diverse experience in Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, Lymphomas, Multiple Myeloma, GI malignancies, Breast cancer, and Lung cancer, and he is passionate about immunology.**

Dr. Wasil is from India, where he began his medical education at Government Medical College. He completed residencies in surgery and emergency medicine, pathology, and microbiology.

He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Flushing Hospital Medical Center, serving as Chief Resident. He completed his Hematology and Oncology Fellowship at North Shore University Hospital and NYU School of Medicine. He spent one-year post fellowship at The Feinstein Institute, working in the Immunology lab led by Dr. Nicholas Chiorazzi, and became part of the team describing novel prognostic markers in CLL, i.e., IgV gene mutations and CD 38. Dr. Wasil holds a patent on the test of CD38 in CLL patients along with two other colleagues.

"I am excited to join NYCBS's rapidly growing organization with its outstanding reputation in the community and its commitment to high-quality care," said Dr. Wasil. "I will also have the ability to provide my patients with comprehensive support and at the same time, also get involved in clinical research."

To make an appointment with Dr. Wasil, please (516) 336-5255.

# Tina Toulon

## Appointed as Executive Director for The New York Cancer Foundation

**The New York Cancer Foundation has proudly appointed Tina Toulon as Executive Director. Tina will oversee the Foundation's daily operations while raising funds for cancer patients who are struggling financially. Previously, Tina served as New York Cancer & Blood Specialists' top physician liaison for Suffolk County.**

"We couldn't be more confident in the skills that Tina brings to the Foundation," said Jeff Vacirca, MD, CEO. "She also brings creativity, compassion, and proven leadership, so I'm excited about the Foundation's future in expanding the role it plays in relieving financial hardships for cancer patients."

Tina plans to double the number of patients and families assisted by the Foundation this year by hosting fundraisers and applying her background in marketing and sales. She holds skills in collaborative selling and account management, with a focus on health care. In addition, there are discussions of upcoming Foundation events, including a charity softball game, a golf fundraiser, and the annual Gala.

"I'm thrilled and honored to have been promoted to Executive Director," said Tina. "The team in place is so dedicated to all the good we do, and to all the good we will do. My vision is to take the Foundation to the next level and help more patients than ever. Their stories are so inspiring, and it's a privilege to be able to assist them."

The Foundation has been awarding grants to qualifying patients undergoing cancer treatment since 2014. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has made it especially difficult for patients to leave their homes. Now more than ever, assisting these individuals, no matter how small or large, can make a difference.

"The opportunity to help families who are impacted by not only a critical illness but from financial challenges as well is something that I have been committed to even before taking on this position," said Tina. "Working alongside my colleagues to assist those in need in our very own community, it's a great privilege. Even our volunteers are eager and devoted to our cause and, in some cases, have been grant recipients themselves. Each story is unique, impactful, and meaningful and should be shared."

To learn more, please visit [nycancerfoundation.org](https://nycancerfoundation.org).





## FINDING

# PURPOSE

## The Desmond Graham Story

**Like many high school seniors determining their identity, Desmond Graham did not have a clear notion about what to do with his life after graduation. At 18 years old he enlisted in the United States Army as an infantryman. After the birth of his sons, Desmond wanted to go in a new direction. So he went for a career in health care as a medical assistant. While in school, Desmond interned at New York Cancer Blood Specialists and found his first mentor in George Calcanes.**

After his internship, Desmond was hired and has stayed in the lab for the past six years. He has held various titles, including Lead Medical Assistant, Lab Quality Assurance Personnel, Regional Laboratory Director, and most recently, Senior Director of Lab Operations.

Desmond works closely with Dr. Riem Badr to ensure that the laboratories are operating as efficiently as possible and that the highest quality of services is provided to patients. The lab's goal is to get the doctors the results they need to make the appropriate diagnosis so that patients get the treatment they need to have a sustainable life. He takes pride in the lab because the lab is the starting point for the doctor and patient.

Desmond is currently working towards his Ph.D. and says the company has been there through every educational aspiration. He completed his BA in Healthcare, BS in Healthcare Administration, and Masters in Healthcare Administration.

Being surrounded by remarkable physicians and colleagues with outstanding credentials made Desmond hungry and has motivated him to keep going. He credits Dr. Badr and Dr. Sharaan, who have helped guide him in the right direction.

"Not in a lot of places where you work, you learn," he says. "Always give 110% in everything you do and always see what's out there. Grow with the company," he encourages.

Desmond continues to apply the leadership lessons he learned in the Army to his everyday life. "Never give up," he says. "Everything I do, one is for our patients, but I'm also showing my children work ethic. When you work hard, you get rewarded."

# LOVE, LIGHT AND TRADITIONS

By Wendy Kaplan, MS, RDN, CSO, CDCES, CDN

Cheers to this year's Christmas, Diwali, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and other holiday gatherings. Holiday traditions bond families together and make memories that last a lifetime. Many of these special moments involve food and are something we all look forward to yearly.

Although the holidays are typically viewed as a time of tradition, happiness, and celebration, they can be difficult for those with cancer. Common concerns I hear surrounding food and nutrition are worried about overeating unhealthy foods (especially ones that are eaten at this time of year), managing unsolicited diet culture messages from family and friends, and continuing with a therapeutic diet during parties and special occasions.

Food does much more than nourish your body, it nourishes your soul as well. Decide in advance what will work for you during this season. Taste everything and watch portion size if you want, but try not to feel guilty if you don't. A little indulging is okay, especially when it comes to those traditional, cultural specialties we all love so much. Most importantly; enjoy the people around you and enjoy your food.

Engage in activities that make you feel healthier and happier. There's a lot to be said for exercise and meditation; try and work both on most days of the week. These activities do wonders for the body and soul and may help you manage your feelings.

**Merry everything!**

Here are some popular International holiday favorite foods from around the world. What are your favorites?

**Pasteles** - Puerto Rican Christmas holiday treats made with various meats, olives, green bananas, and tamale dough.

**Sufganiyot** - An Israeli powdered jelly doughnut deep-fried. This doughnut traditionally eaten on Hanukkah.

**Mithai** - Indian sweets commonly eaten during Diwali, the Hindu "Festival of Lights" holiday.

**Jollof Rice** - A Nigerian dish made with rice, tomatoes, spices, and sometimes meat. This is typically eaten at Kwanzaa.



Jollof Rice

is



Pasteles

**Candied Yams** - An American side dish made with yams or sweet potatoes, marshmallows, and usually pecans. It is served at both Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday meals.

**Melomakarona** - A sweet, honey-soaked Greek cookie topped with ground walnuts. It is eaten on Christmas Day.

**Kimchi and Dduk Gook (Rice Cake Soup)** - Although eaten all year round, Kimchi with rice cake soup make the Korean New Year holiday feast a little extra special.

**Menudo** - A Mexican stew made with tripe, lime, onions, oregano, hominy, and cilantro is eaten with tortillas. This stew is traditionally eaten on New Year's.

**Pavlova** - An Australian and New Zealand meringue cake topped with berries and kiwifruit and covered in whipped cream. It is named after the Russian ballet dancer Anna Pavlova. This cake is eaten on Christmas Day.

**Jansson's Temptation** - A Swedish sweet-and-salty casserole eaten during the winter holidays.



Melomakarona



Pavlova

# Thankful Wall

Patchogue



Thank full for -

My family @ home NYCBS  
- without do what we do  
- w/o everyone...



Life, my kids, for  
babies, friends, family +  
co-workers



Grateful for family  
Friends & getting up every  
morning!!



FOR FAMILY +  
FRIENDS. ♡♡



My family at home  
and my new friends  
here!



Family, Friends, love  
good times, happy  
memories, hobbies



Friends, family, food,  
& wine ☺



my family, pets +  
health job!!



Family  
incl. my work fam!



THE FAM  
Coworkers, Conferences  
& RAINBOWS. country  
music



My Amazing Coworkers



Grateful for my  
Family ♡



Family, Friends, Summer  
Days, my Dog ♡



Our amazing  
Staff ☺ + coffee



Thankful for  
each other ☺



Health CAWFFEE  
Family Happy hour



my family ♡



my wife, NYCBS staff,  
my dogs



Family, friends,  
& health



Thankful for  
Family, Friends, &  
lots of love.



Thankful for Family.  
(and the dogs)



My family, our health,  
opportunities. ☺



my boys, my family  
and weekends!



TACO BELL



I'm Thankful for  
coffee & my Stealy  
Alo!



I am thankful for  
my family and  
friends!



Thankful for life,  
family & health ♡



Thankful for another  
day of life, family, Milky  
+ Pretty Girl



Family. Co-workers.  
My dog. Cappuccinos.



Thankful for my  
family and friends



Grateful for my Fur  
babies ♡



I'm thankful for  
Family, Friends, health,  
Dog, hobby



Thankful to wake & see  
another day w/ my family



My Daughter



My health, family, friends,  
my cats, & coworkers ♡



FOR ALL THE  
BLESSINGS WE HAVE



So grateful for  
my family & health!



I am thankful for  
my kids, family, friends  
& work family



Family, Health,  
Friends, Pets



Thankful for family  
and my health.



My family, my  
dog, & my friends!

# MAMMOS & MIMOSAS



On Sunday, December 5, 2021, NY Breast Imaging hosted its first Friends and Family Mammos & Mimosas event. The event served as an opportunity to empower women to take charge of their breast health and have a clinical breast exam at the brand new state-of-the-art women's imaging center in Lake Success.

The event was a lot of fun. Attendees enjoyed a catered brunch with mimosas and refreshments, while children enjoyed creating snowflake decorations and gingerbread cookies.

Members of News 12 stopped by to capture event speakers: Chief of Breast Imaging Dr. Corinne E. Tobin, breast cancer specialist Dr. Yelda Nouri, and Congressman Lee Zeldin's wife.

Women in the U.S. have a 1-in-8 lifetime risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer. Mammograms can help find or detect breast cancer early, even before a lump can be felt. Annual mammograms are recommended for women ages 40 and older who do not have a family history of breast cancer.



HOLDING

# SPACE

I recently had both the pleasure and the opportunity to work with our new palliative and supportive care provider. The NYCBS palliative and supportive care program continues to grow for those who are not aware, and we have added an additional provider to serve the Central Park and Eastchester locations, Dr. Cristian Zanartu. In the short time we collaborated, we discussed some of the many important elements specific to our patient population. In some of my encounters, he mentioned how I was “holding space” with my patients. By definition, “holding space” means being physically, mentally, and emotionally present for someone. It means putting your focus on someone to support them as they feel their feelings. This allowed me to reflect on the care we give. Holding space is a challenge to many. I say challenge because it is a difficult therapeutic process that many providers find uneasy or uncomfortable. These encounters can be different for everyone. When patients are faced with bad news, sadness, or anger, we naturally look to reassure them, but sometimes if the news is really bad and not what they are expecting, we need to let them process their thoughts. We need to be silent and hold space. A recent



MaryAnn Fragola, DNP

article I read stated that it was important not to run out of the room after telling someone they had a terminal disease with minimal time left. What was important was that you said nothing. You sit there and provide support by sitting there-next to their emotions. You hold space. Sometimes, you sit for 2 minutes. Sometimes 10 minutes. While saying nothing. It feels like an impossibly long time, but you are bearing the weight of that news by just sitting there. Holding space. “Holding space” does not fix the problem, control the situation, make the other person feel inadequate, or directly impact the outcome. Healing occurs as this space is held, and individuals experience the freedom to open their hearts without being judged, shamed, overwhelmed, or to have their power taken away. For this holiday season, hold space. Be there physically, emotionally, spiritually. However, you need to be, to be with your loved ones. Enjoy the moments, enjoy the time as that is the greatest gift of the season!

# GRANDMA JOSIE'S STUFFING

By Michelle Slowey, MA, RDN, CDCES

**Happy Holidays! This is a special occasion recipe that brings back warm memories of my wonderful Grandma Josie. My Grandmother cooked with love and laughter. She barely measured ingredients. She used a little of this and a little of that.**

Since I come from an Italian family, my childhood included delicious meals and special foods that were made during the holidays. I always tell my patients to thoroughly enjoy their special relative's “once a year” dish. At times I have made slight changes to Grandma's stuffing, using brown rice instead of white rice or ground turkey instead of beef; however, this is the recipe that I use it most. Special occasion meals are a part of life's moments that are to be treasured.

Saying yes to a slice of your aunt's famous cheesecake on Christmas Eve isn't going to destroy a healthy lifestyle.

My Grandmother's stuffing was the star of Christmas, and in keeping with tradition, I make this dish every year. While I'm chopping and sautéing the ingredients, I think of Grandma and feel so blessed that I had such a wonderful person in my life. Her stuffing recipe continues to be the star of the holidays, and I know that she would have been so happy to know that her love-filled food continues to be shared and enjoyed.

## Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 lb ground beef
- 1/2 cup grated pecorino cheese
- 1/2 cup vegetable broth
- 1 small onion- minced
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 2 cups rice
- 1 lb broccoli rabe
- 4 garlic cloves-crushed
- 1 lemon wedge
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lb Portobello mushrooms
- 1/3 cup of pignoli nuts
- Salt, pepper, Italian seasonings to taste

## Directions:

Boil rice and add to a large tray when done. Mix in the raisins and nuts. In a large saute pan, heat 2 tbsp olive oil and add 1/2 minced onion. Cook until softened.

LEE

# ZELDIN

**On Monday, November 22, 2021  
New York Cancer & Blood Specialists (NYCBS)  
hosted a fundraiser for Congressman Lee Zeldin.**

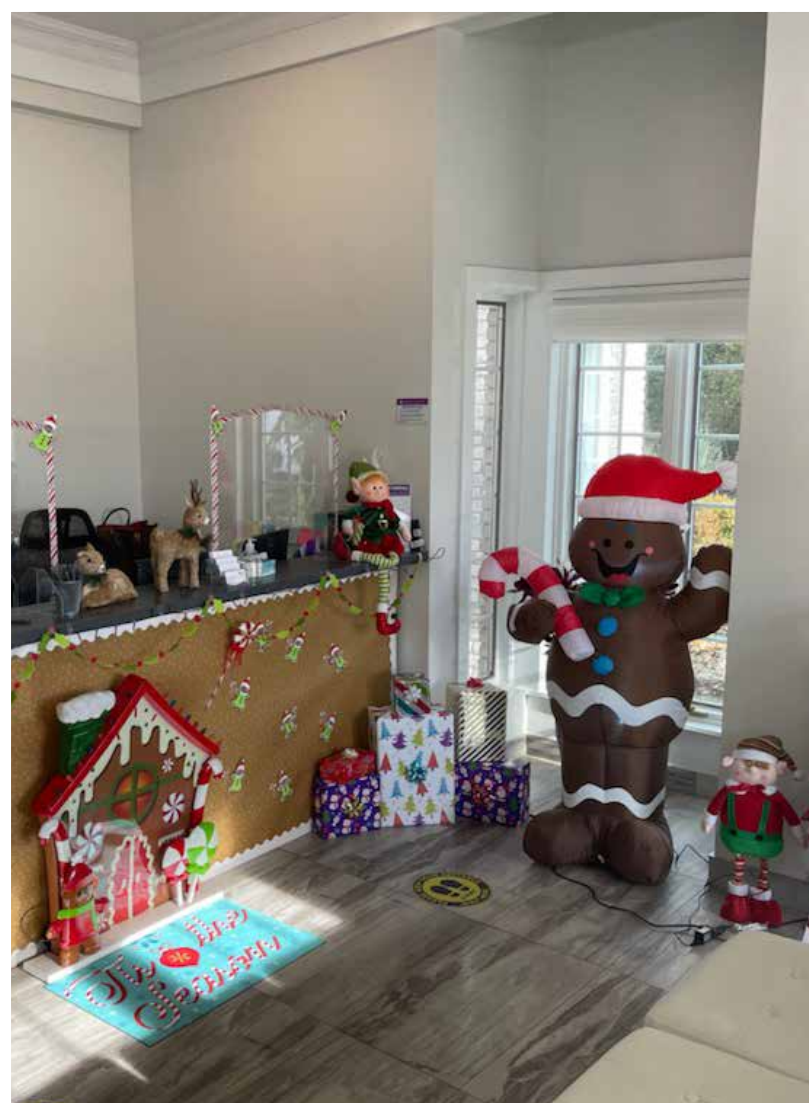
The fundraiser raised over \$90,000 and was attended by Dr. Jeff Vacirca, the NYCBS Administration team and physicians, and elected officials: Senator Mario Mattera, Assemblyman Joe DeStefano, Assemblywoman Jodi Gigli, Suffolk County Legislator Leslie Kennedy, Suffolk County Legislator Rob Trotta, Suffolk County Legislator Anthony Piccirillo, Suffolk County Legislator Kevin McCaffrey, Suffolk County Legislator Nick Caracappa, Suffolk County Comptroller John Kennedy, and Brookhaven Town Councilman Neil Foley.



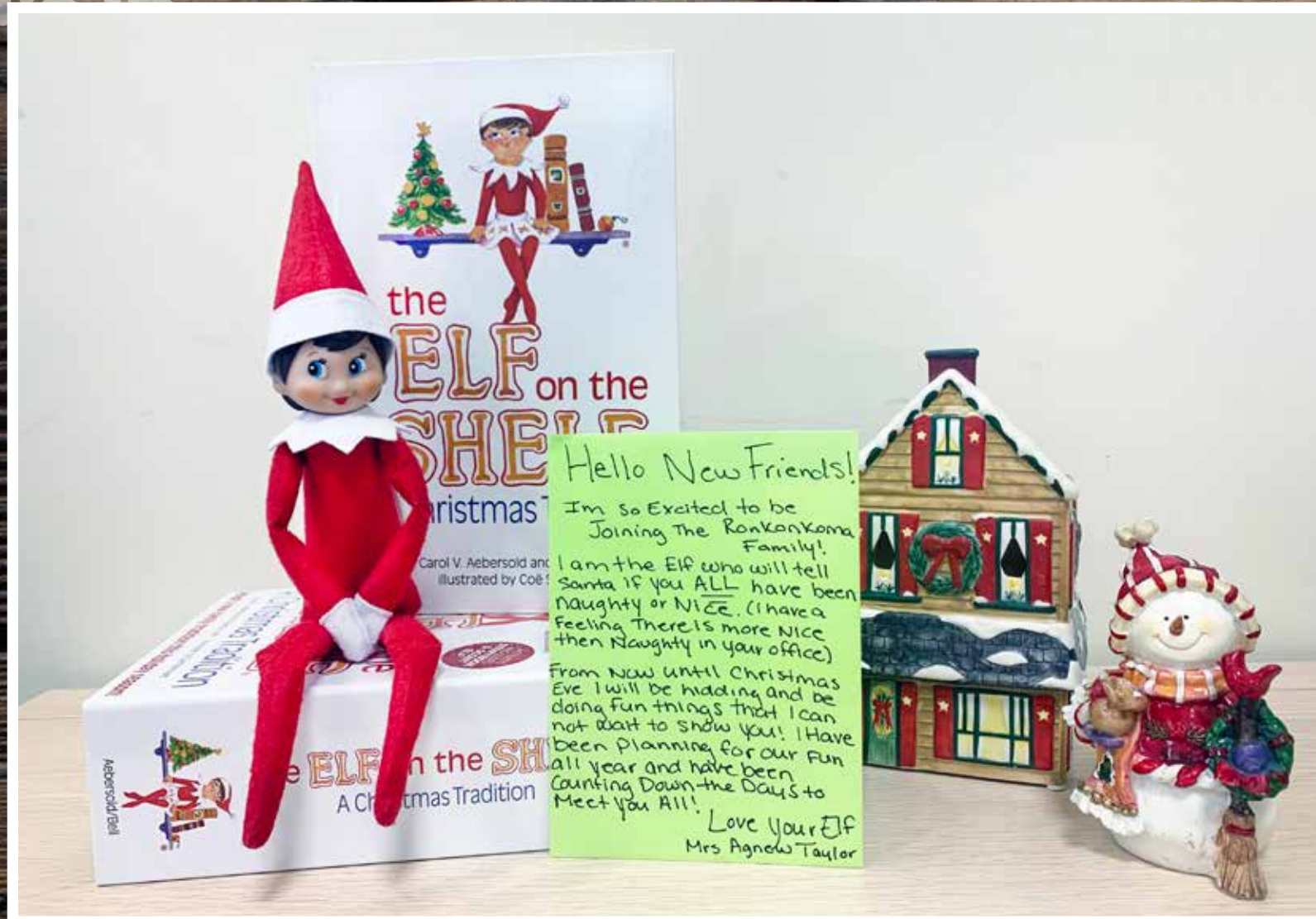
# *Holiday* **DECORATIONS**



# Holiday DECORATIONS



# Holiday DECORATIONS



# The Growth of the APP Role at NYCBS

By Diana Youngs, Chief Clinical Officer of NYCBS



Diana Youngs, RN, MSN, ANP-C

As 2021 closes, I am thrilled and amazed to look back on the growth of the role of the Advanced Practice Provider at NYCBS and NY Health. When I joined North Shore Hematology and Oncology Associates in 2004, I was one of a handful of nurse practitioners working in oncology in Suffolk County. As the practice has grown into today's NYCBS, we have expanded into other specialties, as well as geographically, and our numbers have increased as well. We are now a group of 65 APPs, both

NPs and PAs, who support physicians and locations from Southampton to Staten Island. This year alone, 31 APPs have joined us, with another three hired and scheduled to start by January 2022.

As our numbers have grown, our role has grown and evolved to meet the needs of our patients. In medical oncology, we now have four hospital-based APPs in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. They provide continuity of care for patients as well as invaluable support to our rounding physicians. Their care and expertise have improved the inpatient experience for our patients and have made it possible for NYCBS to partner with other organizations, such as Memorial Sloan-Kettering. In addition to providing excellent patient care, these APPs are instrumental to

maintaining the NYCBS/MSK relationship by communicating daily with referring providers and their staff.

While medical oncology has remained the foundation for our success, our more recent expansion into sub-specialty practice and the development of NY Health have also seen an increased need for APP support. For example, APPs in our NY Health division are working autonomously in the primary care setting. In nephrology, the APPs serve patients in both the office and multiple dialysis units throughout Suffolk County. In NYC, APPs support urology and rheumatology services. We have recently added Rusty Dreksler, the Chief Clinical Officer for Surgical Services, to the NY Health team and an FNP by training.

I am always proud to say that I am part of the ever-growing group of APPs at NYCBS/NY Health, especially when I hear the accolades that come from patients, family members, potential job candidates, and referring providers. I am proud of the work that you all do, from developing new service lines such as Supportive and Palliative Care to developing employee and patient enrichment programs such as the Annual Clinical Education Conference and the Annual Day for Patients Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer.

So as we close the year, I will take this opportunity to thank the APPs for all they do to support our physicians, patients, offices, and communities. The layer of support afforded by the addition of these so-called "mid-level" employees is exceptional and integral to our continued growth and success.

# The Bulletin Board

## Nutrition Department Update

We had the opportunity to attend some sessions at the 2021 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics annual Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE®). Some session topics were: dietary supplements, diabetes, oncology, mindful eating, healthcare disparities, cultural sensitivity, malnutrition, and skeletal health.

Wendy attended (virtually) the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) 2021 Research Conference on nutrition, diet, and physical activity. She is looking forward to discussing and sharing the research presented on lifestyle impacts on immunotherapy, lifestyle manipulation of the tumor microenvironment, and diet and lifestyle patterns in cancer survivorship.

Nutrition consults, both in-person and via phone are going strong for all NYCBS sites, even our newest ones.

There are a lot of great nutrition projects on the horizon for 2022. We look forward to future collaborations. We are thankful to have a team full of dedicated, innovative people who deliver excellent results. We learn and grow from working with you every day. It means a lot having such great support in the workplace.

Happy, healthy holidays and new year!

## Social Work Update

The Social Work team looks to grow into next year. We have two open positions for Nassau/Western Suffolk and NYC. We have expanded our therapeutic services, which are offered to all patients, both in-person and remotely. In addition, we continue to assist patients with their case management needs.

## Dr. Alisa Sokoloff: CPHO

Bartosz Walczyszyn, MD is relocating out of state.

Beginning **December 31, 2021** Dr. Alisa Sokoloff will be seeing his patients at:

12 East 86th Street, Suite 4 - New York, NY 10028.

Patients can make an appointment with: **Dr. Sokoloff** by calling **212-861-6660**.

## Research

The Research Department has enrolled our 100th clinical trial patient in 2021! More than double last year's total!

# THE NEW HIRES

Aimee Fratepietro (NP)

Andreea Maghiar (RN)

Ashley Corley (Flow Technologist)

Ashli Gayle (Receptionist)

Brittany Caban

(Director of Mammography)

Bryan Sicurelli (Patient Scheduler)

Caroline Cernuto (Operator)

Catherine Vilbig (Receptionist)

Christine Evans (LPN)

Diana Lyons (RN)

Elizabeth Pena (Receptionist)

Emmanuel Rodriguez (Medical Records)

Emmarose Flynn (LPN)

Gayan Wickramapala (Chemo Tech)

Gina Messina (LPN)

Gretchen Stevens (Call Center)

Heather Roell (Receptionist)

Jacquelyn Bertonlino

(Clinical Research Coordinator, MA)

Jenna Echeverri (LPN)

Jenny Molano (Lab MA)

Joe Gerardi (Facilities Associate)

Joelle Rabolt (Call Center)

Karen Flores

(Clinical Research Coordinator, MA)

Kristen Thomas (Operator)

Marianne Ellis (Receptionist)

Marissa Terrusa (Patient Scheduler)

Paige Maletta (RN)

Ryan Staudte (Call Center)

Tara Farrell (RN)

Yomi Clement (PA)

Zayda Medina (Lab MA)

## Support the New York Cancer Foundation

Do you or someone you know have the need to provide a donation? Financial assistance? Rides to and from treatment? To be an advocate? If you've answered yes to any of the above, please call our toll-free line at **1-833-588-6923**, or scan the QR Code, or go to our website: [nycancerfoundation.org](http://nycancerfoundation.org).



# OPEN POSITIONS

**Advanced Practice Nurse Navigator (APNN)**  
NYCBS-Port Jefferson  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Licensed Master Clinical Social Worker**  
NYCBS-Port Jefferson  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Oncologists - Medical Manhattan Medical Oncology**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Radiation Oncology Medical Coder**  
NYCBS-Port Jefferson  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Head Nurse**  
NYCBS-Forest Hills  
Contact: Julia Harwood  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Lab Quality Assurance Associate Coordinator**  
NYCBS-New York, NY  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Director of Nursing**  
Port Jefferson Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Hematopathologist Fellows - 7/2022 Start Date Long Island and NYC**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Laboratory Administrator/ Administrative Assistant**  
Port Jefferson Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Mammography Manager**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**PET/CT SCANNER (Full Time/ Part Time/Per Diem)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Ultrasound Technician**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Licensed Practical Nurses (Lpn)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Medical Assistants**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Medical Front Desk Receptionist**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Medical Laboratory Technologist PM Shift**  
Patchogue Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Flow Technician**  
Port Jeff Station Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Staff Hematologist/Medical Oncologist Needed Brooklyn, NY at our Brooklyn Hospital Location**  
Contact: Eric Jackson  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Medical Front Desk Receptionist (New York Health)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Medical Assistants (New York Health)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Nurse Practitioner**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
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**Infusion LPN**  
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**Pathologist Assistant**  
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**Clinical Development And Training Specialist (Western Region)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
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**Patient Scheduler**  
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[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Cat Scan (Ct) Technologist**  
Port Jefferson Station Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
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**Registered Nurses (Bsn/Rn's)**  
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**LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES (NEW YORK HEALTH)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Oncologist/Hematologists**  
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**Healthcare Administrator**  
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**Nurse Practitioner (Np) / Physician Assistants (Pa)**  
NY Health Central Park Staten Island  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Breast Imaging Radiologist**  
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**Lead Medical Assistant**  
Babylon Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti  
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**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**  
Port Jefferson Medical Oncology  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Hematologist/Oncologist**  
Bayside Medical Oncology  
Eastchester Cancer Center  
Patchogue Medical Oncology  
Southampton Medical Oncology,  
Riverhead Medical Oncology

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF NURSING (ADN)**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Nursing Manager, RN/BSN**  
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**LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE (LPN) Port Jefferson**  
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**MEDICAL OFFICE MANAGER**  
Eastchester Cancer Center  
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**Laboratory Implementation Specialist (Western)**  
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**Regional Director (Western)**  
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[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Breast Medical Receptionist**  
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**Breast Medical Assistant**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Breast Office Manager**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)

**Breast Nurse Navigator**  
Contact: Robert Nicoletti, CHRO  
[careers@nycancer.com](mailto:careers@nycancer.com)



# OUR PATIENTS & THEIR FAMILIES

Our patients and their families tell the story of conquering cancer like no other. They help us connect, inspire, and empower. If you know a patient or have a family member who would like to make an impact and share their experience with us, please have them contact [marketing@nycancer.com](mailto:marketing@nycancer.com).