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## Sturdy Memorial now certified in oncology rehab

BY KAREN MESSIER

Recently, Sturdy Memorial Hospital's oncology program became certified in oncology rehabilitation through adoption of the STAR (Survivorship, Training, and Rehabilitation) Program.

The STAR Program is an evidence-based, multi-disciplinary service founded by Oncology Rehab Partners, a nationally recognized organization and industry leader in cancer rehabilitation and survivorship care.

Survivorship has become a distinct phase of cancer care that has been for far too long overlooked. The goal of the STAR Program is to recognize physical and functional impairments that may be present at baseline or at any time during or following cancer treatment. STAR screening helps to identify those elements of distress that could worsen physical impairments and inhibit returning to one's normal level of functioning.

The STAR Program includes a group of experts across disciplines specially trained to participate as a STAR team member. At Sturdy, we are able to offer such services as physical therapy, occupational therapy, lymphedema therapy (through our certified program), speech and swallowing therapy, nutrition counseling, social services including mental health referrals, and wellness, pulmonary and cardiac rehabilitation programs.

These services help to improve residual side effects that may be related to cancer or cancer treatment. Some of these might include fatigue, malignant and non-malignant pain, deconditioning and loss of range of motion, decreased physical strength and lymphedema.

Before initiating oncology rehabilitation, one needs to have an individual assessment to screen for impairments and distress then determine individual goals. The oncology nurse, nurse navigator or social worker may screen individuals to help identify needs

and facilitate appropriate referrals to support services. Remember the goal of rehabilitation is to improve symptoms and to enhance quality of life.

As needs and levels of function vary, patients and survivors are given the opportunity to participate in one or all of the services offered within the program. Whether one is going through treatment, living with disease as a chronic condition, or is in remission with lingering issues, rehabilitation may be able to offer help.

Sturdy's oncology team is comprised of dedicated, specially trained STAR clinicians who are experienced in cancer care. The oncology staff can help cancer patients and families meet their physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs. The cancer program is accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (COC) and all of the nurses in the outpatient oncology department are certified by the Oncology Nursing Credentialing Committee (ONCC).

Sturdy's comprehensive cancer care program can coordinate and provide care for all but the most uncommon cancers. The program has been continuously accredited since 1989 based on the hospital's ability to meet more than 30 required quality standards, signifying that our high quality standard of cancer care is always maintained. Patients here get the same cancer treatment options and protocols they would find in a major cancer center, including national clinical trials, chemotherapy, infusion therapy, surgery, state-of-the-art radiation therapy and oncology rehabilitation.

For more information about the STAR Program or cancer care at Sturdy Memorial Hospital, call 508-236-7981 or 508-236-7010 or visit [www.sturdymemorial.org](http://www.sturdymemorial.org).

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