HOSPITAL
OF THE MONTH

Putnam Hospital Center

With the cutting edge Varian Medical Systems Trilogy Linear Accelerator for radiation therapy in position at the center, after a cancer diagnosis, patients no longer need to travel for radiation treatment. Typical radiation therapy can run five times a week for six to eight weeks. Having to travel long distances can be a threat to patients' immune systems. The Camarda Care Center is a one-stop solution.

A multidisciplinary team of medical, radiation and surgical oncologists, pathologists, radiologists, oncology nurses, genetic counselors, pharmacists, physical therapists, nutritionists and case managers work collaboratively to render leading-edge cancer therapy to patients.

A full range of cancer diagnostic and treatment services is available including: a dedicated 4-slice CT scanner and workstation for treatment planning; screening and diagnostic digital mammography; ultrasound; needle biopsies; surgical biopsy and pathology for all types of cancer, as well as chemotherapy and surgery.

PCH's cancer program is accredited with commendation by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer and received an outstanding achievement award.

Approval by the CoC is given to facilities that voluntarily provide the best in diagnosis and treatment of cancers. PCH had to pass a rigorous evaluation process and performance review in order to receive the Commission's endorsement, placing PCH in the top 15 percent of cancer programs in the country indicating a high level of quality in patient care.

A CoC-approved Cancer Program ensures patients will receive services including: quality care close to home; comprehensive care offering a range of state-of-the-art services and equipment; and a multi-specialty team approach to coordinate the best treatment options available to cancer patients.

"Another focus of this new building is on the top two floors. We moved 35 semi-private rooms in the main hospital into 70 private patient rooms in the new hospital. What that does is enhance treatment and management of patient care. It provides privacy and helps in infection control. It is what patients want," said Schneider. "They do not get charged any more for a private patient room. This is becoming an industry standard."

The new private rooms are double the size of the semi-private rooms. All color-coordinated rooms are individually temperature controlled and have flat-screen televisions with cable and Internet access. Private baths are equipped with shower seats for safety and have ample storage space for patients' personal effects among other amenities.

Space on the center's other floors are dedicated to physician offices and the 96-seat Michael T. Weber Community Auditorium opened for hospital and community usage.

The freed space in the main hospital will be renovated as administrative offices and used for other medical units.

The innovative Camarda Care Center is another way that the 164-bed hospital has distinguished itself from other community hospitals by committing to quality healthcare services that most community hospitals do not offer.

PCH, a Health Quest affiliate, offers unique services including a 20-bed adult in-patient psychiatric unit and partial hospitalization program—an intensive outpatient program—and a homecare department to help discharged patients acquire additional homecare personnel and assistance.

As with most community hospitals, PCH offers many outpatient services—radiology, wound care, pain management, and rehabilitation—in addition to a birthing center, stroke center and a diabetes self-management program.

Yearly, PCH's ambulatory surgery unit performs a full range of surgeries for over 5,000 patients. Since 2004, the ambulatory surgery services have ranked in the top 10 percent in New York State for patient satisfaction, as measured by Press Ganey Associates and recently, a New York State Department of Health study noted the hospital's surgical infection prevention rate was the highest in the region.

PCH's 10,000-square-foot 24-hour emergency department is the region's most advanced emergency care facility staffed with residency trained, board certified emergency medicine physicians using the latest high-tech equipment to aid in diagnosis and treatment.

The hospital is the largest employer in the county. There are over 300 physicians, in all the major sub-categories, that round out a 1,000-person staff. There are over 300 volunteers—250 adults and 50 youths—who do many jobs around the hospital, from greeting guests at the front desk to transporting patients and working in the thrift shops.

"The hospital is very active in the community. We do screening programs and special events," said Schneider. "In September, we held a 'Kids' Day, where kids learned things about health and safety." Several thousand children along with their parents participated in the day's free exhibits and demonstrations.