



**ILLINOIS
CANCERCARE, P.C.**
Specializing in Cancer and Blood Disorders



Melissa Swanson, RN, BSN, OCN & Dr. Madhuri Bajaj of the Gastrointestinal Multidisciplinary Cancer Clinic

Putting Patients First by Bringing Experts Together

Gastrointestinal Multidisciplinary Cancer Clinic

Putting a patient's needs first is at the heart of a Multidisciplinary Cancer Clinic. An expert in medical oncology, hematology, and internal medicine, Madhuri Bajaj, MD, formed the Gastrointestinal Multidisciplinary Cancer Clinic at Illinois CancerCare, P.C. (ILCC) as a cutting-edge approach to treat her patients. "When a patient is diagnosed, they realize it takes a team to take care of them," she explains. "They usually need to meet with a surgeon, a medical oncologist, radiation oncologist, and a support team consisting of counseling people, nutrition people, financial assistance people, etc." In most cases, these experts are spread across multiple clinics, hospitals, and even cities. It is rare for medical experts representing different healthcare entities to sit down together in the same room as the patient.

The GI Multidisciplinary Cancer Clinic brings this team of specialists together with the patient for an all-in approach that is meant to eliminate obstacles such as scheduling multiple appointments at various locations. It also allows for cutting-edge collaboration as the patient's cancer management evolves over the course of their treatment journey. For the patient, this often means better communication with the best treatments available, as well as saving time and money that would have been spent attending multiple appointments.

This scale of coordination is maintained by Illinois CancerCare's Clinic Coordinator Melissa Swanson, RN, BSN, OCN. "I help with each of the patient's needs in and out of the multidisciplinary clinic and determine the right time to bring them in to meet with all of their doctors together," she says. "As they sit down and meet with their

healthcare team, I listen and take notes. I go back over with the patient what their treatment plan is, what they just discussed with the doctors, and give them in layman's terms the list for what our next step is." Melissa is also responsible for coordinating care between the different healthcare entities involved in the patients' journey. Surgeons, radiation oncologists, and nurse coordinators from Springfield Clinic, UnityPoint Health, and OSF HealthCare all work together with Illinois CancerCare specialists toward a common goal: the patient first. "We all work together in our specialties to deliver top-notch care to each patient," says Melissa.

The relationships Melissa has with her patients cannot be understated. She is with them from the very beginning and sticks with them as an added line of defense. When a great deal of information is dumped upon the patient from multiple doctors, Melissa is there to help sift through it, interpret, and answer questions. "Supporting them through the process is paramount," she declares. "People work through these things really well, especially if they have someone there to help them through it."

Dr. Bajaj and her team have plans to expand the Multidisciplinary Cancer Clinic to include additional cancer sites such as breast cancer and melanoma. In the meantime, with colon cancer, a type of GI cancer, remaining the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States, the Gastrointestinal Multidisciplinary Cancer Clinic at Illinois CancerCare aims to provide the best care and survival rates for patients throughout central Illinois.

The Gastrointestinal Multidisciplinary Clinic is a part of Illinois CancerCare, P.C. and is located at 8940 N. Wood Sage Road in Peoria, Illinois. If you or a loved one needs care, please call us at (309) 243-3000 or (866) 662-6564. Or visit our website at www.IllinoisCancerCare.com.