Accreditation
Owensboro Health’s Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center is dedicated to providing care that meets nationally accepted standards to residents of Kentucky and Indiana. To demonstrate that commitment, the center has earned accreditation from multiple governing healthcare bodies, reflecting that we deliver treatment in keeping with the highest recognized standards of care. Owensboro Health Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center is accredited as a “Comprehensive Cancer Center,” the highest endorsement awarded to any community hospital by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons.

The following accreditations have been earned by Owensboro Health’s Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center:

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS’ COMMISSION ON CANCER
Established in 1922, the Commission on Cancer (CoC) is a consortium of professional organizations dedicated to improving patient outcomes and quality of life for patients with cancer through standard-setting, prevention, research, education and the monitoring of comprehensive quality care.

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS’ NATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM FOR BREAST CENTERS
This accreditation is awarded to facilities that voluntarily commit to providing the highest level of breast care. This accreditation requires a rigorous process of evaluation, survey and review before being granted.

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RADIOLOGY CERTIFICATE OF ACCREDITATION IN RADIATION ONCOLOGY SERVICES
The American College of Radiology (ACR) requires all facilities that seek accreditation to demonstrate a commitment to following nationally accepted standards of care. The process also includes a peer-review evaluation process involving respected experts in the field of radiation oncology.

The Radiation Oncology Accreditation Program provides third-party, impartial peer review and evaluation of patient care. Staff, equipment, treatment planning and records, patient safety and quality control activities are assessed.

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RADIOLOGY LUNG CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM
Owensboro Health was one of the first sites in Kentucky to join the Kentucky Clinical Trial Network for tobacco-related cancers and was one of the first centers in Kentucky to offer low-dose CT lung cancer screening. It is an ACR-designated Lung Cancer Screening Center.

The process of accreditation is challenging. We are proud to have earned these accreditations, in keeping with our mission to heal the sick and to improve the health of the communities we serve.
WE TRULY BELIEVE THAT ONE DAY WE WILL BE PART OF THE STORY OF HOW CANCER WAS CURED. Until that time comes, we are committed to striving every day to improve the quality of care we provide to you.

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DEAR READERS,

We are pleased to present to you the 2019 public report of outcomes of Owensboro Health’s Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center.

As you will read in this year’s report, cancer patients in the Owensboro area not only have excellent care right here, they also have access to national-quality research and treatments through our affiliation with the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center. This partnership makes a real difference in patients’ lives, and we are proud that Owensboro Health is part of the UK Markey Cancer Center Affiliate Network.

As an American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer Comprehensive Cancer Center, we provide world-class treatment and are working to prevent cancer by promoting healthy behaviors while also striving to diagnose cancer earlier than ever thanks to screenings.

We truly believe that one day we will be part of the story of how cancer was cured. Until that time comes, we are committed to striving every day to improve the quality of care we provide to you.

Thank you for reading, and thank you for the confidence you place in us as your healthcare providers.

DR. ALAN MULLINS
OWENSBORO HEALTH
SURGEON/COMMISSION ON CANCER CANCER LIAISON PHYSICIAN

DR. TIMOTHY MULLETT
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY MARKEY CANCER CENTER AFFILIATE AND RESEARCH NETWORK MEDICAL DIRECTOR

AS AN AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS COMMISSION ON CANCER COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER, WE PROVIDE WORLD-CLASS TREATMENT and are working to prevent cancer by promoting healthy behaviors while also striving to diagnose cancer earlier than ever thanks to screenings.
Bladder cancer might not be the first type of cancer you think of when someone mentions the word cancer. But the American Cancer Society says almost 80,500 new cases are reported every year in the U.S. It’s the fourth-most common cancer in men, and more than 17,000 people die from the disease every year. Nine out of 10 people diagnosed with it are over the age of 55, with an average age of 73. Daviess County sees an average of 32 cases of bladder cancer each year.

The first sign that you may have bladder cancer is usually hematuria, or blood in your urine. If doctors suspect bladder cancer, they can diagnose the disease through a cystoscopy, a procedure where they insert a hollow tube with a lens into your urethra and examine the inside of your bladder. If they find a tumor, they will proceed with a biopsy, the results of which “really drive the way we treat it,” said Dr. Daniel Warburton, a urologist at Owensboro Health. The biopsy is called a TURBT — Transurethral Resection of Bladder Tumor, and it enables doctors to stage the cancer.

From there, the doctors involved in a bladder cancer case will determine the best course of action from the four main pillars of cancer treatment: surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and immunotherapy. The best option depends on the type of bladder cancer a patient has, and how advanced their disease.

The overall five-year survival rate for bladder cancer is 69 percent. If the cancer has metastasized outside the bladder, the survival rates drop to 35 percent if the cancer has reached the lymph nodes, and as low as five percent if it has metastasized even further throughout the body. However, less than five percent of cases are diagnosed at a metastatic stage — most bladder cancer is diagnosed early enough that the proper treatment can make a huge impact.

“If you’re having blood in your urine, get it checked out,” said Dr. John Mulligan, a radiologist at Owensboro Health. “Early diagnosis is important — that’s why we do scans if you have blood in your urine.” Imaging techniques such as CTs or MRIs, are “crucial for staging bladder cancer,” he said. “They’re important for finding, treating, following and staging it.”

The best way to avoid bladder cancer? Quit smoking, said Dr. Warburton. “The most important modifiable risk factor for bladder cancer is tobacco use. The number one way to prevent it is to stop smoking.”

“The most important modifiable risk factor for bladder cancer is tobacco use. The number one way to prevent it is to stop smoking.”

DANIEL WARBURTON, MD
OWENSBORO HEALTH UROLOGY

JOHN MULLIGAN, MD
RADIOLOGY
Chemotherapy plays a very important role in bladder cancer of all stages.

No matter the treatment options each bladder cancer case requires, Owensboro Health is committed to providing the best care for each situation.

Treatments usually include surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, depending on the exact cancer.

The most common type of bladder cancer is transitional cell carcinoma, which grows on the inner surface of the lining of the bladder. This non-muscle-invasive cancer can usually be treated with endoscopic surgery and bladder medications, while muscle-invasive cancer, which has begun to invade the walls of the bladder, usually requires chemotherapy first and then more radical surgery. If the cancer is advanced enough, or if it returns after a first round of treatment, a cystectomy to remove the bladder may be needed.

"Chemotherapy plays a very important role in bladder cancer of all stages," said Dr. Jacob Hodskins, a medical oncologist at Owensboro Health. "If the bladder cancer is in stage four, Dr. Hodskins prescribes some of the same drugs, but he also sees a role for new immunotherapy treatments that have shown durable responses - that is, they have given the patient a "much longer survival than what was previously seen," he said. Immunotherapy treatments make cancer cells in the body visible to your immune system, which can then kill the cancer cells. If chemotherapy is finished and the patient is not healthy enough for surgery or if they want to focus on preserving their bladder instead of removing it, radiation comes into play.

If they are able to preserve their bladder due to this course of treatment, though, they are willing to make that trade-off.

Dr. Ryan Abel, a radiation oncologist at Owensboro Health, said he sees relatively few bladder cancer patients for radiation because most bladder cancer is caught early, before radiation becomes necessary.

"As of his bladder cancer cases involve either muscle-invasive cancer or bladder cancer that has metastasized to other areas of the body as well. A course of radiation treatment lasts six to seven weeks depending on the severity of the cancer. Recovery lasts about two weeks after that, and most patients do well, although they may have to go to the bathroom more frequently because the size of their bladder has shrunk."

**THE SURVEILLANCE, EPIDEMIOLOGY, AND END RESULTS (SEER) PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE (NCI) IS AN AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON CANCER INCIDENCE AND SURVIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES. SOURCE: NCI, NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE; HTTPS://SEER.CANCER.GOV/ABOUT/OVERVIEW.HTML
"I help make sure their treatment is streamlined, their questions are answered."

COLLEEN BREY, RN, OCN
ONCOLOGY NURSE NAVIGATOR

SUPPORTIVE CARE HELPS CANCER PATIENTS
If you have been diagnosed with bladder cancer and are going through treatment, you’re probably going to feel a little disoriented for a while. You’ll hear lots of unfamiliar words and you’ll trust your doctors are doing what’s best, but you will likely still have lots of questions that need answers.

That is exactly why Colleen Brey serves as an oncology nurse navigator at Owensboro Health’s Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center. “I meet and talk with the patient early on in their treatment,” she said. “I help make sure their care is streamlined, nothing falls through the cracks, their questions are answered, they’re getting all available services and they understand what’s going on.”

She acts as a patient advocate offering support, education and guidance. “It’s nice to have a central person you can contact,” she said. “You’re seeing a lot of different doctors and specialists. Here’s one nurse you can call for just about anything. We follow them throughout their whole continuum of care.”

HELP BEATING RISK FACTORS
A risk factor is anything that increases the chance you will get a certain disease, such as bladder cancer. Risk factors vary for different cancers. Some of them are behavioral issues that you can change, such as what you eat, while others are given facts about age or family history that you cannot change.

A risk factor is anything that increases the chance you will get a certain disease, such as bladder cancer. Risk factors vary for different cancers. Some of them are behavioral issues that you can change, such as what you eat, while others are given facts about age or family history that you cannot change.

When it comes to bladder cancer, the single most important risk factor is smoking. According to the American Cancer Society, smoking causes about half of all bladder cancers in men and women, and smokers are at least three times as likely as non-smokers to get bladder cancer. Cigarette smoke includes more than 1400 toxic chemicals, some of which are toxic to the bladder, the urinary tract and epithelial cells.

Because smoking is such a big risk factor for bladder cancer and even other types of cancers, Owensboro Health dedicates several resources and programs toward getting people to quit smoking.

The Freedom from Smoking program at the Owensboro Health Healthpark is designed to help people learn how to quit smoking, said Beth Cecil, Registered Dietitian and Manager of Community Wellness Services, who runs the seven-week program. Cecil said about 45 percent of people quit smoking during the program, for those who don’t stop, “we’re just trying to give them the resources to quit smoking eventually,” she said.

Those resources include a nicotine replacement program and the 1-800-QUIT-NOW phone line, a national program that offers online coaching and support.

Cecil said their program has seen a surge of referrals as they run promotions in the community and work with Owensboro Health providers to make them more aware of their services. Bladder cancer patients at Owensboro Health’s Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center who want to quit smoking also have access to a certified tobacco treatment specialist who offers one-on-one counseling to assist with smoking cessation.

Whatever the method, the message is clear: if you want to lower your risk of cancer, stop smoking for good.

PHARMACEUTICAL OPTIONS
You also want help making sure you are getting the most advanced treatment options that give you the best chance to beat the disease. That’s where Kelsey Turcotte, clinical pharmacy specialist in hematology and oncology, plays a key role.

Since she started her position at Owensboro Health’s Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center in mid-2019, Turcotte has helped patients care for their number one priority. “The physicians are utilizing advancements in therapies all the time,” she said. “I assist the physicians in making sure we’re getting the appropriate treatment for the patient and we are on the front line of treatment options.”

Because treatment guidelines are updated frequently, Turcotte stays in constant contact with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network to check for any discrepancies in what the guidelines for a particular medicine say and what the doctor has ordered. She also checks to make sure high-risk medications like chemotherapy are covered by the patient’s insurance.

Turcotte went to pharmacy school at Union University and then completed residencies in general pharmacy and hematology/oncology before landing at Owensboro Health.

Her education gave her a leg up on learning about new immunotherapy treatments for cancer as well. In the last few years, immunotherapy has been added to surgery, chemotherapy and radiation as a pillar of cancer treatment. It’s a targeted therapy that only acts on specific receptors, so it boosts the body’s immune system to fight on its own. While there are no specific new treatments for bladder cancer, physicians are using immunotherapies to fight the disease.

Turcotte’s office is located next to the infusion rooms in the Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center, so she can explain treatment options to patients, which helps dispel any mystery around their treatment.

Another facet of Turcotte’s role is making sure the correct medications are available for patients when they arrive at Owensboro Health’s Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center for treatment. She also conducts medication use evaluations, where she uses data to improve prescribing practices and guidelines.

“In the world of pharmacy, cancer patients have a soft spot in my heart,” Turcotte said.

Owensboro is fortunate to have someone filling this role — not every facility has the resources to invest in a position like this. “I like everything about it,” Turcotte said about her job. “We are making such huge strides in cancer treatment.”
CLINICAL RESEARCH BENEFITS PATIENTS.

When the University of Kentucky basketball team is ranked number one in the country, it’s good for the state. Another number one ranking, though, is not as good – Kentucky has the highest incidence of lung cancer in the United States, along with the highest rate of mortality from that cancer.

To fight this problem, the Kentucky LEADS (Lung Cancer Education, Awareness, Detection, Survivorship) Collaborative formed five years ago. Part of this effort, led by the University of Kentucky, focuses on analyzing the quality and accuracy that is expected statewide. Data from all over the state is then analyzed at UK to find ways to improve lung screening programs, Dr. Mullins said. As Owensboro Health is under the UK umbrella for this program, Owensboro Health is bringing new facilities like the Healthplexes in Henderson, Hopkins and Muhlenberg Counties under their own umbrella. This will help provide the same quality and accuracy that is expected statewide.

Another positive aspect of the LEADS study has been a multi-disciplinary review process of lung screening results. Dr. Mullins said: Owensboro Health physicians hold a cancer conference each Wednesday to review new cancer cases and determine the best course of treatment: surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, etc. When lung cancer screenings show results that may indicate cancer, the doctors quickly review those cases and determine the next step.

If the radiologist determines there are nodules in the lungs, they are rated by national criteria called LRADS (lung RADs) that take into account the size of the nodules, the type of border they have and other characteristics. This rating is then factored into the treatment decision.

“This approach came out as a result of LEADS,” Dr. Mullins said. “It was a compliment they asked us to be in the study - it will benefit our community.”

In 2018, the program screened 1,270 patients at Owensboro Health; as of November 13, 2019, they had already seen 1,471 patients and for 2019, the program volume is expected to assist nearly 2,000 patients.

Most people are referred by their primary care provider, said Lung Cancer Navigator Ashley Jones, who manages the program full-time. In addition, anyone is welcome to schedule their own appointment. Once the screening has taken place, Jones calls each patient with the results, usually on the same day.

If the screening shows nodules that require a follow-up, Jones helps with a referral to the lung nodule clinic in the pulmonary office at Owensboro Health. She can also refer them to the Freedom From Smoking program at the Healthpark and 1-800-QUIT-NOW for help in smoking cessation.

“I love the opportunity to speak to these patients and possibly encourage them to change a habit,” she said.

LEADS is just one clinical trial available at Owensboro Health. Patients also have access to a wide variety of trials through a partnership with the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center. To participate, they must meet eligibility requirements, so physicians are constantly evaluating patients to see who may benefit.

Tissue and Specimen Analysis Study – Another notable trial Owensboro Health patients can participate in is a tissue and specimen analysis study of every cancer type. Genomic testing through the study produces actionable information about DNA sequences, which researchers can compare to normal DNA to determine cancer-causing mutations. Only 19 major cancer centers in the country check the database for information about how to personalize treatment for their patients. “It’s a massive amount of data,” Dr. Mullins said. “If there is an answer to how we’re going to cure cancer … we’re part of it. It’s cutting-edge research.”

“New drugs we have now are a result of clinical research,” said Robin Osborne, Clinical Research Specialist at Owensboro Health. “We wouldn’t have the cancer treatments we have today if volunteers had not participated in clinical research.”

These research studies let patients be a part of innovative treatment that could change the way diseases are treated in the future. “The National Comprehensive Cancer Network believes that the best management for any patient with cancer is a clinical research study,” Osborne said.
“Owensboro Health has a great reputation and great providers working to take care of patients. They are clearly one of the top programs in the state.”

TIMOTHY MULLETT, MD
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
MARKEY CANCER CENTER AFFILIATE AND RESEARCH NETWORK
MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Relationship with UK Markey Center benefits Owensboro Health cancer patients.

Residents of Owensboro and surrounding areas may not live in the big city, but they have access to national-quality cancer care right here thanks to Owensboro Health and its membership in the University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center Affiliate Network.

The network includes 21 hospitals across the state. Its purpose, according to Medical Director Dr. Timothy Mullett, is to help standardize high-quality cancer care across the state while providing access to unique services such as transplants and high-risk cases that local hospitals may not be able to provide.

“We provide the right care in the right place at the right time.” Dr. Mullett said. If a cancer patient has a complex surgical need, for example, they may receive chemotherapy and radiation at their local hospital and then be transported to UK for the surgery. Because of the formal network, all of the details of such a case are much easier to work out, from the call requesting the treatment all the way down to transport details.

“It’s a huge opportunity,” said Dr. Alan Mullins, the cancer liaison physician with Owensboro Health’s Mitchell Memorial Cancer Center. “They are now a major cancer research center and they are doing a very good job of being the state institution.”

Dr. Mullett said the Markey Cancer Center was ranked in the top 33 cancer programs in the country by U.S. News and World Report. “We’re a resource for Kentucky and the region,” he said. “We want to make sure we have an impact.”

Owensboro Health is also a member of the Markey Cancer Center Research Network, a group of seven hospitals that provide their communities access to research studies conducted by the Markey Cancer Center.

“Owensboro Health is an outstanding program,” Dr. Mullett said. “They have a great reputation and great providers working to take care of patients. We work well with them. They are clearly one of the top programs in the state.”