

THE CANCER CALLING

It's not just a job, it's a calling

November 16, 2017

Issue 2, Volume 1



WELCOME

Greetings, All:

Welcome to the November issue of Cancer Calling, the newsletter for MCW Cancer Center staff.

I hope you had a chance to attend one of our many research events in the last few months; Grand Rounds, research program meetings, and other seminars and symposia.

These events are not just for faculty! Your participation helps build a stronger connection with the cancer center members you work with and support. It's also a great reason to get away from your desk or office and learn more about the amazing cancer research happening at MCW and around the country.

Much of the research presented at these talks is funded through grants from the National Cancer Institute. In the past 18 months, MCWCC researchers have submitted and received a record number of grants from the NCI and other NIH institutes. You can read more about some of these new awards here. In addition, MCWCC researchers have submitted several large P01 program-project grant applications that were scored well and are now in the resubmission process.

This success would not be possible without the support of the Cancer Center staff, who play a key role in getting better grant applications out the door. MCWCC staff provide broad and deep support including administrative leadership, literature reviews and other information gathering, references, writing and editing, figure development, protocol development, completion of other attachments, regulatory assistance and pre- and post-award budgetary and finance services.

Kitty Marquardt, Research Program Manager, and her team have even set up an online grant support request form where researchers can ask for assistance with all aspects of pre-award development, including editing, scientific review and administrative coordination.

As someone who has worked closely with staff members throughout the grant development process, I'd like to take a moment to recognize the hard work that goes into putting a grant together. This isn't something that happens overnight; it takes a concerted effort from many staff members alongside the researchers to produce an excellent final product. You and your efforts are appreciated!

Once again, thank you, and I hope to see all you at an upcoming scientific talk!

Dr. Hallgeir Rui

HANDLING STRESS IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

WELLNESS

By Rachel Italiano

Stress. Everyone's experienced it in some aspect of their life, including the workplace, at home or in the classroom. It's pervasive; it can make its way into areas unrelated to its source and turn the simple joys of living into the daily grind of surviving.

On top of normal factors, many of you may experience an even higher level of stress due to your daily interactions with cancer patients and families. While these experiences are incredibly rewarding, they also increase your level of stress. The Cancer Calling spoke with Kathleen Jensik, MSW, to learn more about stress, common stress triggers and coping skills.

The first step to handling stress in your life is recognizing when you are under its influence. "There are many ways your body tells you you're stressed," says Jensik. "Some signs might include a rapid heartbeat, shallow breathing and headaches." There are also cognition signals including problems with thinking, memory and concentration. "Ironically, when we're experiencing a high level of stress and need a clear mind, that is the time when we probably feel the most unclear," Jensik said.



As you learn to recognize stress, you'll most likely notice that common events precede feeling stressed. These are known as triggers. Triggers are usually discovered through patterns, and it's important to identify these patterns. Identifying triggers can help you plan how to address stressful situations. While this will not necessarily prevent stress, it can help you deal with it more effectively. Your plan could consist of many different coping skills, including deep breathing, regular sleep and exercise and healthy meals. According to Jensik, coping skills vary. "Ultimately, it comes down to what works best for each individual person," she said. "No two people will handle stress in the exact same way, so it's important that each person figures out what strategy best fits them."

There are many low or no cost resources to help you figure out what works for you to manage stress. Free yoga classes are now available for Froedtert and MCW staff (contact wellnesswork@froedtert.com for more information) and there are several free phone apps that provide easy meditation or mindfulness exercises. Check out <https://www.headspace.com/> or find one that speaks to you. In our building, the patient walking path on the 2nd floor, the 3rd floor art gallery or the meditation room in the lobby are areas to take a quick break and recharge.

A MOMENT WITH...

Stephanie Dhein, MA, Research Program Coordinator

MCWCC: What is your educational background? (schools, degrees, other training/experience)

Dhein: I received my Bachelor's degree (BA) in Psychology from UW-Madison in 2014, and received My Master's degree (MA) in Counseling with an emphasis in Higher Education from Lakeland University in 2017.

MCWCC: Why work at MCWCC?

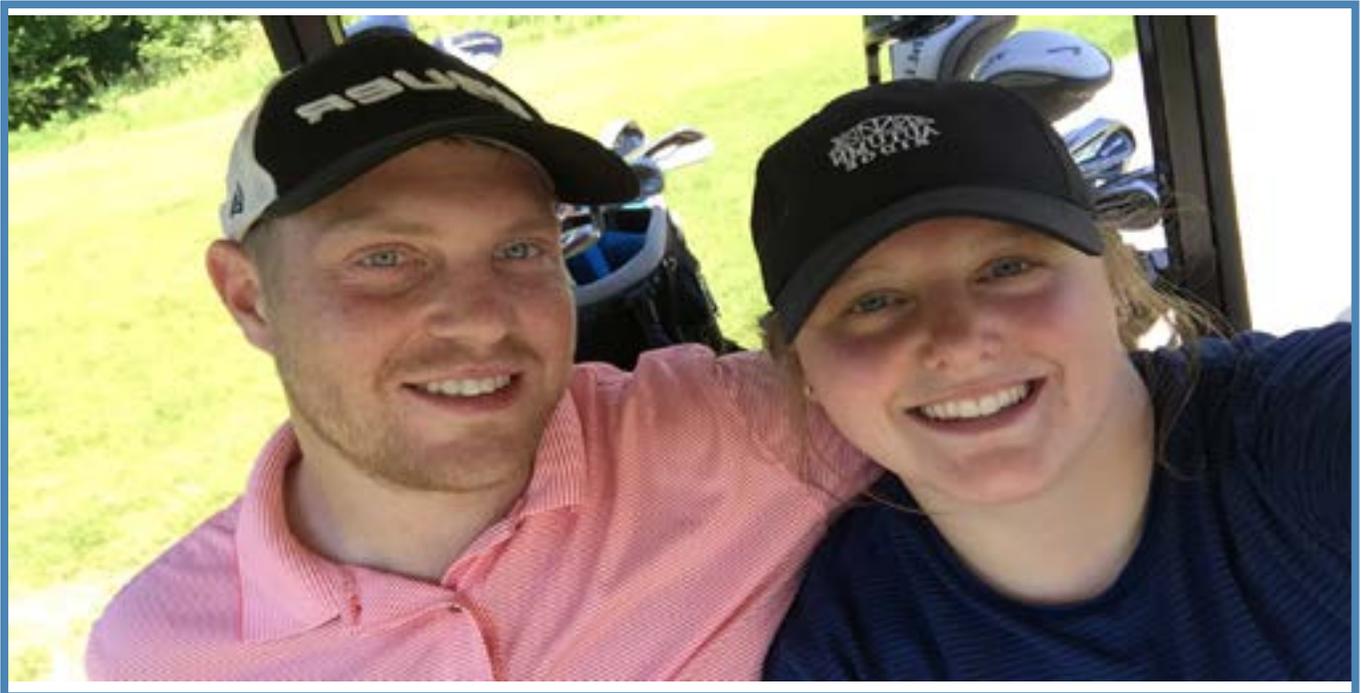
Dhein: I've always been really interested in working at an academic institution! When I first started at MCW, I wasn't really sure what to expect, but the longer I'm here the more I learn! The focus on patient care and cancer research were both very motivating factors for me to take on a job at MCW. My family has personally been affected by cancer, so seeing the process from bench to bedside here has given me a new appreciation for this field!

MCWCC: What do you do in your free time?

Dhein: Spend a lot of time on the lake back where I'm from! I enjoy boating, playing pickleball, cooking, and have been recently spending a lot of time remodeling the home we just purchased here!

MCWCC: What do you enjoy most about your job?

Dhein: I enjoy the variety! When I come into work every day, I'm always doing something different! I have the opportunity to work with other staff, and many faculty members here at MCW which has been a really great learning experience. I've been introduced to so many different things along the way, and I appreciate the opportunity to learn something every day in this position.



BRIEFING FROM BETTY

I'm grateful for you and the work you do!

A very happy fall and Thanksgiving to you all!

Later this week we'll take time with friends and family to celebrate what we're thankful for, and today I want to share my gratitude for each one of you and the work you do every day.

I am so appreciative of your commitment to your work, to each other, and to our patients. Your contributions to research and compassion for our patients is inspiring, and does not go unnoticed by others. Here's what physicians and researchers have to say about our staff:

"How could we run a cancer center without the level of support we get from our administrative and CTO staff? Not so well! You are the glue that holds our programs together, leverage for our physician's, researcher's and leader's expertise, and the persons who pay attention to the details so leadership can focus on mission, vision and strategy."

"The clinical trials office staff are an outstanding group of professionals. Thank you so much for your hard work and dedication to our research endeavors - and for keeping us on track. We truly could not do it without you!"

Your efforts are greatly appreciated by all the providers, as eloquently demonstrated by Dr. Hall's gracious recognition of your support at our November CTO meeting.

As we begin the final stretch to become an NCI designated Cancer Center and join the ranks of the best centers in the nation, it's important to recognize what that means every day. Keep doing what you are doing! We bring more opportunities to our patients and help them fight their cancer with more advanced tools than ever before. It's an amazing time to support cancer research.

I wish you all a very happy holiday season and look forward to a new year working with whom I believe are the most dedicated professionals in MCW!

With thanks,

Betty

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: KIRSTEN BEYER, MPH, MS

MCWCC: What are some of your current/upcoming projects?

Dr. Beyer: I am just beginning work on two new projects. The first, a recently funded R01, focuses on the relationship between institutional racism, racial residential segregation and breast cancer disparities. The second is a pilot study to develop an intervention to reduce adverse symptoms among breast cancer survivors, based on a body of work that indicates the benefits of time spent outdoors and exposure to natural/green environments on depression, deficits in cognitive function, and other symptoms.

MCWCC: What attracted you to your field?

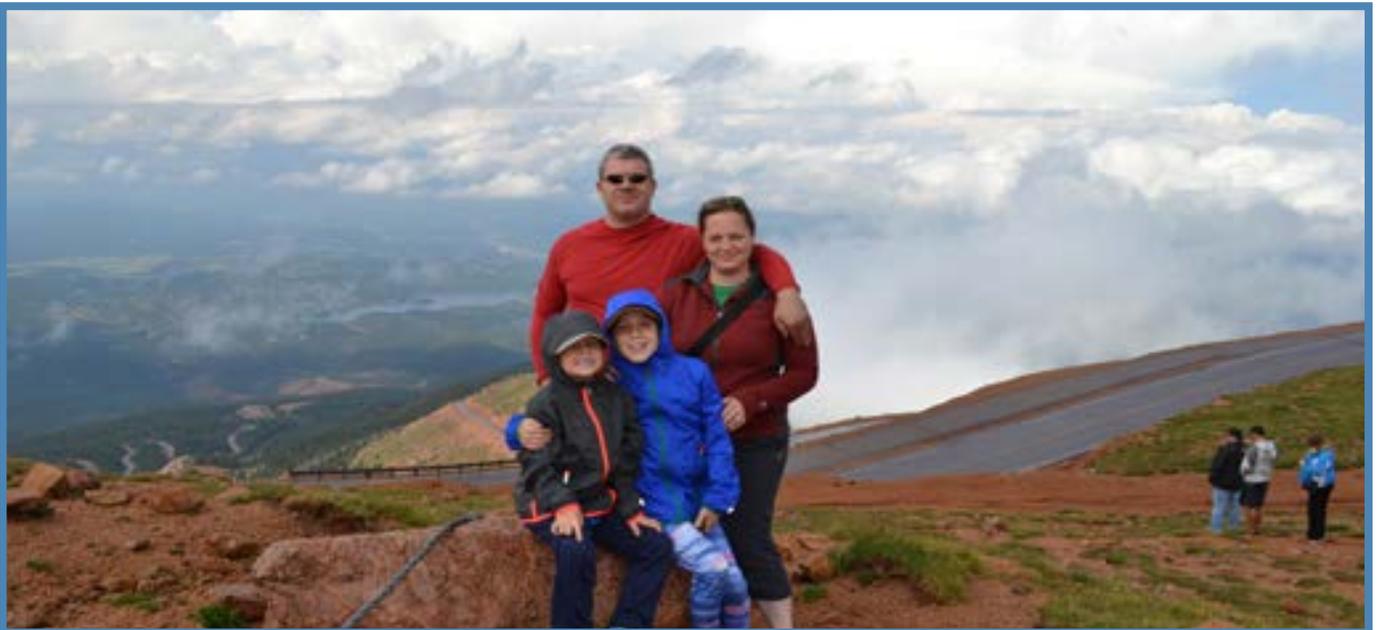
Dr. Beyer: I enjoy both geography and public health because they are both disciplines that push, and struggle with, disciplinary boundaries. Some of the most important discoveries are made in the spaces in between disciplines.

MCWCC: What do you enjoy most about your job?

Dr. Beyer: I enjoy opportunities to be creative and collaborative in solving real problems, and working to move research findings into practical applications.

MCWCC: What's your dream car? Do you drive it, and if not, what do you drive?

Dr. Beyer: My dream car is one that has no environmental impact. I'm not sure that it will ever exist, but I drive something that is as close as I can get right now – an electric car.



TOWN HALL CONVERSATION CREATES VALUABLE DIALOGUE

COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS

By Rachel Italiano

On Thursday, October 5, the MCW Cancer Center hosted its Town Hall Conversation: Understanding Cancer Impact in Milwaukee, which emphasized the findings of Dr. Staci Young's qualitative research project. Dr. Kirsten Beyer provided an overview of cancer inequities before Dr. Young's project was discussed. The project used focus groups, with a total of 79 participants, to discuss several topics relating to cancer: cancer prevention and healthy communities, cancer screening and early detection, cancer diagnosis, treatment and survivorship and reasons why the cancer experience is different in Milwaukee. Several common themes developed within the groups, including the importance of community investment and the criticalness of family and spirituality. Town Hall attendees were also given information about upcoming research and event opportunities in the community.

"Conversations like these help raise awareness of existing cancer disparities at the local level," said Anne Mathias, MCWCC Communications & Community Relations Manager. "We are able to meet people in places they're comfortable and have real, honest conversations about the inequities, why these exist and ways to start to resolve these. This valuable dialogue increases understanding of Milwaukee's cancer disparities."

The event was held at the Wisconsin Black Historical Society in Milwaukee, with Clayborn Benson III providing the opening blessing.

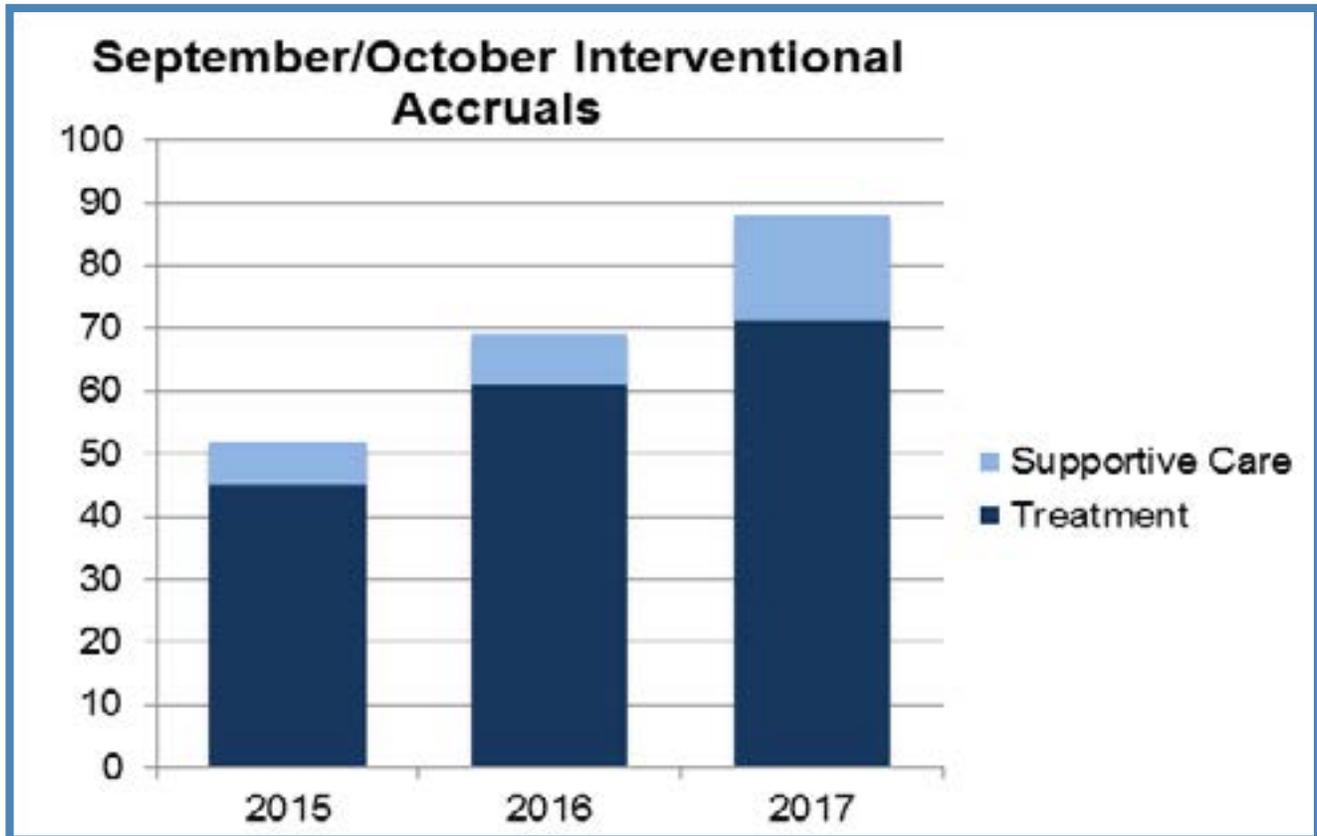


ACCRUAL SUMMARY

By Jennifer Bollmer

CTO UPDATE

The Cancer Center enrolled 88 patients (adult and pediatric combined) to interventional trials over September and October of this year, outperforming those same months from years past.



CALL FOR CONTENT

Do you have a story to tell? *Cancer Calling* wants to hear it! Send ideas about recent achievements, successes, updates and more to ritaliano@mcw.edu by November 22 at 5 p.m. for inclusion in the November edition.

MARILYN'S MUSINGS

Every year, staff members engage in many activities above and beyond their roles here at the Cancer Center. They donate their time, effort and funds to organizations, events and giving campaigns such as the recent United Way Coin Competition, where individuals donated their spare change to raise contributions to support the United Way of Greater Milwaukee. The giving campaign ran from September 25 to October 10. There was a lot of friendly competition between the teams, with staff making strategic positive and negative coin contributions over the two weeks. In the end, the finance team ended up on top, and Cancer Center staff gave a total of \$731 to the United Way.

I'd like to take a minute to recognize Cheryl Knapp and Ebony Carson. They spearheaded this event and kept everyone updated on the progress. Great work!

In addition to great effort on the United Way campaign, there are many other ways that our staff show commitment to our community.

Take Operation Chemo Comfort. Since its inception in 2016, the group, cofounded by Carrie O'Connor and Kelsey Lexow, has delivered care packages and more than 4,300 headscarves and hats to cancer patients. It recently raised nearly \$5,500 this fall in its inaugural fundraiser.

Cancer Center staff have also volunteered and raised funds for Kathy's House, the American Cancer Society Relay for Life events, the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Showhouse (WBCS) luncheon and fashion show, local Cub and Boy Scouting and the Triumph Fund dinner.

I'm sure there are many, many other ways that Cancer Center staff serve and support our community, and I'm proud to work with such a generous and committed group of people. I'd love to hear about your favorite volunteer or fundraising project. Send me an email, and we can feature your efforts in an upcoming issue of the *Cancer Calling*.



WELCOME TO...

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