

# ELLIS IMPACT

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION FOR ELLIS MEDICINE

FALL 2021



The Ellis Medical  
Oncology Team

THE FUTURE OF  
CANCER CARE  
IS **NOW OPEN**

Ellis  
MEDICINE



ROSWELL  
PARK  
CARE NETWORK MEMBER

MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

To make an appointment call **518.243.4762** or visit **RoswellatEllis.com** for more information.



# CANCER CARE

in our community will never be the same –  
in all the best possible ways



MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

## EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE BEST CANCER CARE, REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU LIVE.

Ellis, in partnership with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, now delivers advanced and widely accessible medical oncology care to our region. Working closely with Ellis' already established radiation oncology and surgical teams, this groundbreaking partnership brings the third and final pillar of cancer treatment to Ellis Hospital – medical oncology. This means sophisticated care is now accessible close-to-home for the residents of Upstate New York.

Why is having a Roswell Park Care Network site in our community a monumental change for oncology

services? Cancer is the only disease Roswell Park physicians and scientists work to cure.

Roswell Park is solely dedicated to the research and treatment of cancer. Their laser focus and emphasis on research means the Roswell team is constantly advancing toward newer, better, and safer ways to treat even the most complex cases.

Roswell has earned the National Cancer Institute (NCI) distinction and is one of only 51 Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the U.S. To receive this distinction from the NCI, centers must meet rigorous standards for transdisciplinary, state-of-the-art research focused on developing new and better approaches to preventing,

diagnosing, and treating cancer. This designation signifies that the Institute has contributed fundamentally to the fight against cancer.

The partnership with Roswell denotes Ellis as a Roswell Park Care Network Member. Our patients will benefit from national best practices and quality care, the latest technology, the most innovative therapies, and the expertise of the most experienced cancer teams. Ellis' site is led by Dr. Tallat Mahmood, a Roswell-employed physician working solely at Ellis Hospital. Dr. Mahmood decided to lead this site based on the plan to make Ellis a "mini Roswell Park." The goal is to grow and enhance oncology services for our community, this is just phase one.

## MEET THE ELLIS MEDICAL ONCOLOGY TEAM



**Thomas Schwaab, MD, PhD**  
*Chief of Strategy, Business Development and Outreach for Roswell Park*

Dr. Schwaab is responsible for assuring that business and clinical initiatives, like the Ellis Medical Oncology site, deliver care to the Roswell standard of quality, efficiency and effectiveness. Dr. Schwaab is board certified in urology and provides care to patients with bladder, kidney, prostate, and testicular cancer.



**Tallat Mahmood, MD**  
*Medical Director, Ellis Medical Oncology, a Roswell Park Care Network site*

Dr. Mahmood is the boots-on-the-ground Roswell physician who will be caring for cancer patients at Ellis. Dr. Mahmood was drawn to Ellis and Schenectady because of Roswell's vision for growth and commitment to building a research program.



**Renée Jahn, MSN, RN**  
*LEAN 6σ Green Belt, Director for Medical Oncology*

Renée oversees the operations and clinical aspects of the Ellis site. Renée brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her team, including many years of work as Ellis' Director of Quality and Infection Prevention.



**Brianna Wells, BSN, RN**  
*Nurse Manager for Medical Oncology*

Brianna leads the medical oncology nursing team ensuring every patient receives exceptional clinical care, compassionately.

Ellis and Roswell Park share a commitment to reducing cancer's impact on the lives of Capital Region residents with unobstructed access to groundbreaking care for a disease that touches countless lives. This partnership ushers in a bright new day for our community, and Ellis is marching forward with so many reasons to hope for better and healthier lives for every cancer patient we are honored to serve.

Roswell Park resources are available to residents throughout Upstate New York. Our oncology staff will work to get you or your loved one an appointment with our cancer experts as soon as possible. If you have any questions or need help switching your care, please contact:

**Ellis Medical Oncology**  
**518.243.4762 or visit**  
**[www.RoswellatEllis.com](http://www.RoswellatEllis.com)**



Paul Milton, President & CEO and Leslyn Williamson, Chief Operating Officer & Chief Nursing Officer



Dr. Mahmood and Renée in the new medical oncology site, designed to be a comfortable, welcoming setting with dazzling views for our patients.

## JOIN OUR ONCOLOGY TEAM

**Nurse navigators and other cancer support positions available.**

If you are interested in joining Ellis' medical oncology team, please visit [ellismedicine.org/careers](http://ellismedicine.org/careers) for more information.



## THE VISION FOR CANCER CARE for our Community

*A message from Paul Milton, Ellis President & CEO and Leslyn Williamson, Chief Operating Officer & Chief Nursing Officer*

Cancer touches the lives of millions every year. One would be hard-pressed to think of an individual who has not watched a loved one battle one of its many forms, or themselves been faced with a diagnosis.

Ellis recognized there was a gap in services for cancer treatment, both at our hospital and in Schenectady. Ellis has long offered two of the three pieces of a strong cancer program: surgery and radiation oncology. Starting a program to include the third piece, medical oncology, became a priority for Ellis, and as a community hospital, it is our responsibility to ensure complete cancer care is available to all.

To build a medical oncology program, we thought not only strategically, but outside the box – who could we partner with to help us provide this critical need to our community? Roswell Park answered this very important question.

Partnering with Roswell Park brings to the table the most highly skilled specialists, advanced and quality driven medical treatments, and access to clinical trials. Most importantly, care will be offered in your community hospital.

Roswell Park's culture for care is one

that mirrors ours – ensuring everyone has access to lifesaving cancer care, regardless of age, gender, race or income level, because cancer impacts everyone. This partnership means we can eliminate barriers that could potentially keep our most vulnerable patients from accessing the unparalleled cancer treatments they deserve. There is no longer a need to travel hours away to receive treatment from a Roswell Park physician, and undertake the extra expense, separation from loved ones and navigation of an unfamiliar hospital. Ellis Medical Oncology, a Roswell Park Care Network Member, is now here to serve every resident in their time of greatest need.

Our vision for Ellis is to meet cancer's challenge to our community with every possible weapon in our arsenal. Our partnership with Roswell Park is a fortification of our armory. We will be there to help fight the cancer battle, every step of the way.

It was a proud and exciting moment for all of us at Ellis and Roswell Park when we opened our doors last month. In partnering, we are uniting our strengths to save lives. Together, we will serve our community with compassion, inclusion, and excellence.



## donor spotlight



Gene and Sue Zeltmann

And thank you to Sue and countless other donors, for supporting Ellis so we may provide advanced cancer treatments to our patients and offer our community so much hope for good health.

## Sue Zeltmann knows firsthand the role that HOPE can play in a cancer journey.

**When Sue's beloved husband Gene was diagnosed in 2018, they both relied on hope to buoy them through the long, difficult treatment process. Gene's treatment, like that of many others, was complicated by a further obstacle—the need to travel outside the region to receive the state-of-the-art medical oncology he required.**

Ellis' partnership with Roswell Park will now provide the most advanced treatment options right here in our own community, sparing patients and their families logistical stress and increased time away from the comforts of home in their already overwhelming battle.

Sue also understands the hope that Roswell Park represents for patients and their loved ones. The highest quality of care, and the ease with which it can be accessed, will make other patients' cancer experiences vastly easier, with much more reason to hope for the best outcome.

Sue has many reasons to support Ellis Medical Oncology, a Roswell Park Care Network Member. Her gift honors the tradition she and Gene had in supporting Ellis, remembers Gene and the leadership he provided as Chair of The Foundation for Ellis Medicine Board of Trustees, and provides hope to generations of patients who will receive cancer care at Ellis.

### WE ARE SO THANKFUL TO SUE FOR SHARING HER AND GENE'S STORY:

"When my husband Gene received his devastating diagnosis of Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) in May 2017, we were faced with few choices for first-rate oncology treatment other than to take the more than three-hour trip to either Boston or New York City. We chose Dana Farber in Boston.

The doctors and medical staff there were amazing, and they arranged for local treatments for Gene, with occasional trips back to Dana Farber for follow-ups. They never let us give up hope. Although we all knew this was a life-threatening, fatal disease, they gave him the best, most current care while letting us hope for a possible stem-cell transplant, which would help him live a better life for as long as he could.

Unfortunately, it wasn't to be, and he passed away in February 2018.

Now we have the Roswell Park Care Network site in Schenectady partnering with Ellis to treat people like Gene right here at home. How much nicer and easier it will be to have this wonderful facility close to home for people suffering with any cancer diagnosis. How comforting for patients not to have to travel—they can stay close to their families and still receive state-of-the-art oncology care. I know Gene would have loved this option, and Ellis Hospital is to be highly commended for providing it.

Gene was a huge supporter of Ellis Hospital, as well as a board member for five years, and he would be so proud of Ellis for bringing this superior level of care to our area. Thank you, Ellis Hospital."





Timothy Zagar, MD provides radiation oncology care to patients with the new linear accelerator. Dr. Zagar and his physician partners at Northeastern Radiation Oncology supported the purchase of this new machine.



The new linear accelerator is up and running. In addition to providing cutting edge radiation treatment, much thought was incorporated into the design of the room and patient comfort.



“We believe our role is to provide the most timely, efficient, and effective care for each patient. We take that role seriously.”

**CHRIS DOLINSKY, MD**  
Chief of Radiation Oncology

## TREATING CANCER with radiation

Radiation therapy is often used in conjunction with surgery and chemotherapy to treat certain cancers. And, often, radiation alone is enough to kill cancer cells. Radiation therapy has been a lifesaving program at Ellis since the 1990s, and our community recently supported the purchase of a new linear accelerator (Linac) at Ellis Hospital.

Technology has advanced to the point where our older equipment was unable to offer the most sophisticated treatment. With older technology, more healthy tissue is negatively affected by radiation treatment than necessary, which becomes critical if the tumor is near vital organs. The extreme precision of the new linear accelerator allows doctors to take treatment to the next level.

The new machine allows our physicians to treat patients who previously were not able to receive care locally. The majority of treatments with the older Linac were skin, lung, breast, and prostate cancers. The precision of the new equipment allows Ellis to treat patients with challenging tumor sites in the brain, spine, prostate, liver and lungs.

This new technology also reduces the amount of time a patient is receiving daily care, decreases recovery time, and diminishes associated side effects. Additionally, the new Linac helps to improve access to care by reducing appointment times by one-third and increases the number of patients able to be treated by more than 30%.

“When patients have to travel five days a week for many weeks for treatment, it can be very challenging, both logistically and physically,” said Chris Dolinsky, MD, Chief of Radiation Oncology. “And, obviously, we’re looking at not only the treatment as being the most advanced but also that we’re delivering it in a convenient location: locally, and within Ellis Hospital where they may also be receiving chemotherapy and/or surgery. We believe our role is to provide the most timely, efficient, and effective care for each patient. We take that role seriously.”

**We are sincerely thankful to the community for their support of this cutting-edge technology. It directly impacts the quality of life that countless patients experience during their cancer journey.**



The Radiation Oncology team is grateful for the community's support of cancer care at Ellis.



## SURGERY IS OFTEN WHERE A CANCER PATIENT'S JOURNEY TO WELLNESS BEGINS.

Before, and often after, an initial cancer diagnosis many patients place themselves in the hands of our team of highly skilled surgeons. Partially or fully removing a tumor is sometimes needed to ensure a successful transition to infusion and/or radiation treatments. Surgery also provides the opportunity for pathology testing, so the Ellis team knows exactly how to destroy cancer cells.

The Ellis surgical team is armed with experienced, knowledgeable, and skilled surgeons who use the latest techniques including robotic and laparoscopic procedures, to care for patients. Now is the time to ensure our operating rooms match our surgeons' skills, and have the space to accommodate the latest equipment and technology.

Our goal is to modernize our operating rooms with state-of-the-art equipment, expand on our robotic and minimally invasive procedures and improve flow and circulation around high-tech equipment. Robotic and minimally invasive procedures reduce pain and scarring, shorten healing time, and ensure that patients get back to their lives faster.



Dr. Montalto and Dr. Syed are the surgical leaders at Ellis and partners in providing exceptional care to all who need it.

Community philanthropy will play a key role in bringing these exciting plans to life for all patients at Ellis. Our surgery team stands ready to start patients back on their path to restored health and we hope you will join us in making this possible.

Surgery, medical oncology, and radiation oncology are the three pillars upon which exceptional cancer care is built. Ellis is proud of the strength of all three of our pillars and the ability to offer our patients this high level of care all under one roof. A cancer diagnosis can be challenging for patients and their loved ones to navigate – the Ellis surgical,



medical oncology and radiation oncology teams are ready to make the cancer journey easier for all.



### Meet our Surgical Leaders:

#### IFTIKHAR SYED, MD

Is the Chief of Surgery for Ellis. Dr. Syed has been a trusted surgeon who has provided exceptional care to our community for more than 30 years. He is considered an expert in laparoscopic surgery and is a mentor to many of his medical colleagues.



#### NICHOLAS MONTALTO JR, MD

Is the Medical Director of Surgical Services providing leadership and oversight of the surgical teams and sites throughout Ellis. Specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, Dr. Montalto is dedicated to providing superior surgical care to our community.



We celebrate the huge advancement in our region's ability to combat cancer with a tremendous feeling of gratitude to you, our generous donors, for helping make it possible.

All of us have been touched by cancer, whether we have dealt with it ourselves or watched someone we love bravely face their own battle. The new Ellis Medical Oncology, a Roswell Park Care Network site, is going to save lives in our community. This new partnership will mean different things to different people, but for some in our community, it will mean everything.

**A daughter will have her mother.**

**A husband will have his wife.**

**And, friends will have one another.**

We cannot emphasize enough the profound and life-changing impact your giving has on Ellis and the community. Your donations have made the collaboration between Ellis and Roswell Park a reality. The creation of the warm, welcoming medical oncology site where every patient's individual case will be treated with care, attention, compassion, and skill was 100% funded through philanthropy. Thank you.

The new radiation oncology linear accelerator, another weapon in the fight against cancer, is 100% funded through philanthropy. Thank you.

Each on its own, the Roswell partnership, investments in radiation oncology and upgrades to our surgical capabilities, is a great leap forward in having world-class care in our community. Combined, we can achieve unimaginable outcomes for every patient who is faced with a cancer diagnosis. Everyone in our region, regardless of income, access to transportation, or ability to travel, will have the best treatments provided by the

most skilled physicians and clinicians, and backed by research and best practice right here, in our own hospital.

Please know that the trajectory of local cancer patients' journeys has been forever changed because of your commitment to your neighbors.

The work is not complete, this is just the first phase. Our cancer program will continue to grow to meet the demands of our community. Your continued support is key to helping us expand.

Thank you for helping to ease cancer's burden on everyone in our community. Whenever a patient has quick and easy access to the expert and life-saving cancer care they need, we recognize that our donors helped to make it possible.

Your generosity reminds us that you are our most important and steadfast partners.

With gratitude,



**Marcy Steiner**  
Vice President &  
Executive Director  
The Foundation for  
Ellis Medicine



**David Horan, Jr.**  
Chair, The Foundation  
for Ellis Medicine  
Board of Trustees

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### A SINGLE PERSON CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Ellis was established through a generous donation from a concerned citizen who saw an incredible need for Schenectady to have its own hospital in 1885. That seed grew into a regional community hospital that continues to provide exceptional care to our entire community.

#### **Imagine what you can do.**

Your gift will help improve the quality of care provided with new technology; skilled nurses, physicians and other providers; and smarter facilities that meet the evolving demands in healthcare. We rely on our community's support to help us deliver that care.

As 2021 winds down, please consider making a donation to support cancer care at Ellis, or any of the hospital's services. Visit [www.ellismedicine.org](http://www.ellismedicine.org) and click on philanthropy, or use the QR code below on your smart phone.

Your gift saves lives, your impact reaches far and helps so many. You can be the person that makes a difference.



**Ellis**  
MEDICINE | THE FOUNDATION  
[ellismedicinefoundation.org](http://ellismedicinefoundation.org)



Planning for the Future...

## SAVE THE DATE:

### **Cardiac Classic 5k**

#### **November 25, 2021**

Thanksgiving Morning

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT —  
[ellismedicine.org/foundation/events.aspx](http://ellismedicine.org/foundation/events.aspx)  
and click **Cardiac Classic 5K**

### Staying Connected

