

The Southampton Press

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CANCER JOURNEYS

A Twice-a-month column from
Fighting Chance

*50th Anniversary of the
National Cancer Institute*



Diagnosis

Emotional Impact

Treatment/Side Effects

Survivorship

Patient Stories

1970: NCI to Lead the “War on Cancer”

At Fighting Chance we have been providing free-of-charge crisis counseling to East End cancer patients for over 18 years. A question almost every patient asks is this: “When will cancer be cured and who is working on that?”

As for who is in charge, the short answer is a federal agency: the National Cancer Institute or “NCI.” In 2021--just a few weeks away--the NCI will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

The work of the NCI began in earnest in 1970 when President Nixon declared a “War on Cancer” and the NCI began receiving vast sums of federal funding to be distributed to academic researchers working on cancer drug development

Those lobbying for the legislation hoped that cancer would be cured in six years--in time for America’s Bi-Centennial in 1976. The chief promoters of this initiative included the President, congressional leaders and DC lobbyists.

Comprehensive Cancer Centers (“CCCs”)

Over the years the NCI has given its CCC designation to some 50 fac-

ilities with best-in-class cancer research teams; some also treat cancer patients. This handful of CCCs account for about 5% of the 1,500 cancer centers in this country that treat the disease and, sometimes, also conduct research.

**NATIONAL
CANCER
INSTITUTE**

Importance of CCCs to Cancer Patients

Most of the Nation’s 50 CCCs are bolted onto massive hospital complexes affiliated with a major university--and they receive the majority of NCI’s grant awards. If you are diagnosed with cancer and live in a rural or even suburban community, chances are that the nearest CCC is too far away to serve as a center for your treatment.

Access to a CCC by East End Cancer Patients

There are only three CCCs in the entire State of New York. One is in Buffalo and the other two – Columbia and Memorial Sloan Kettering are in New York City.

Going to the City on the Jitney, for a patient and caregiver, can cost over \$150 round trip. It would be great if the tickets were free. And they are, if you call Fighting Chance, which gives away free tickets, jointly funded with Hampton Jitney under the program called “Cancer Patients Ride Free.” We have given away over 500 Jitney tickets per year, over the past 5 years.

Clinical Trials

Another feature of CCCs is that they are the epicenter of “clinical trials” which refers to the experimental use of newly discovered cancer drugs on humans. Sometimes--but not always--joining a clinical trial can produce remarkable results.

If patients do not want to travel to Columbia or Memorial, they should know that the Cancer Center at Stony Brook University Hospital is now hosting several hundred clinical trials.

Fighting Chance has offices in
Sag Harbor and at the
Phillips Family Cancer Center
in Southampton.

For more details, or information
please call 631 725 4646.

Visit our website at
www.fightingchance.org