



Dear WOCA Advocate,

Wow, what a great year 2016 was!!! Thank you for your amazing support and generosity, without it we would not have been able to accomplish everything that we did.

We are excited about the changes and growth to come in 2017.

- We revamped our website which completed in January. We made it much more user friendly, and added some additional areas of interest provided by your feedback. Please look for our "Ask the Doctor" question and answer blog coming soon!

- We introduced the "Cup of Comfort". While continuing our "Comfort Tote" outreach in hospitals throughout the state, we have also added a "Cup of Comfort" to the program. In case you are not familiar, our Comfort Tote is given to ladies on their first day of treatment. This tote contains items that may serve useful to them throughout their treatment. After hearing from survivors how leaving treatment can sometimes be a very scary step, we developed the "Cup of Comfort". This cup will be given to ladies on their last day of treatment. Our goal is for this gift to serve as a friendly reminder that WOCA is here to support them, and their family.

- We continued our Teal In Need Campaign (In honor of the Cathy Mislinski Legacy Gift). Our goal is to continue to financially assist every woman that applies.

- And we continued with our current programs already in place.

On behalf of myself and the WOCA Board and Staff, I want to **THANK YOU** for your continued support of our organization. It is an honor that you trust WOCA with your funding, and allow us to make a meaningful impact of those affected by ovarian cancer throughout the state. We look forward to continuing our mission throughout 2017!

Sincerely,

Ashley A. Wagner

Executive Director

ashley.wagner@wisconsinovariancancer.org

A Few Highlights From 2016

Donated
\$40,000 to
Two Ovarian
Cancer
Researchers
in Wisconsin

Awarded a Grant
from the OCRFA to
Kick Off the "Woman
to Woman" Program
at the Aurora
Women's Pavillion

Taught over 300
Medical Students
through Survivors
Teaching
Students®: Saving
Women's Lives

Delivered over
130 Comfort
Totes to
Hospitals
Across the
State

WE ARE... The Real Teal!!!



Dr. Elizabeth Dickson - Michelson
Aurora Health Care - Gynecologic Oncology

Many times when women are diagnosed with cancer, there is a difficulty truly separating the disease from the person who has the diagnosis. Too many times the cancer becomes the “center of their universe.” This can be a very heavy burden to bear, to think that who you were is no longer, and the only thing left is this disease which is fighting you for survival. Much of my desire to help women with cancer stems from the need to make sure that women do not feel like their sense of self is taken away, and to ensure that their quality of life—at diagnosis, through treatment, and into survivorship—is maintained to the best of our abilities. Being a gynecologic oncologist is not to treat just the disease process, but to support, foster, and guide women through this journey of cancer.

Princess Diana said, “If I am to care for people in the hospital, I must really know every aspect of their treatment and understand their suffering.” This is why I wanted to become involved with a wonderful organization, such as Wisconsin Ovarian Cancer Alliance (WOCA). This gives me an opportunity to be able to spend time with the women we treat, and to support them outside of the hospital, and to make sure that we continue to enhance and fund research efforts to find a cure for this disease. Because it is not just about the chemotherapy or the surgery. It is about how women are affected by the disease. How they continue to carry on day to day, not just with their treatments, but with the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional side effects as well.

What drives me in my practice is getting to understand and know each woman’s story: where they have been and what they have come from. These stories, ones of struggle, heartache, joy, and happiness, makes each woman much more than a “patient.” We become a family, a part of a team to help through both the good times and the bad times. Through the treatment, and then to support even after, each woman needs to know that they are not alone in the walk down this pathway of life. WOCA is an integral part in this support: giving women an outlet to discuss concerns, find answers, and find hope amongst many other women who are going through the same thing. I hope to continue to find new ways to support these women, and fight alongside them against this disease.

Know your Body, Know the Symptoms, and **BEAT** Ovarian Cancer.

- B**- Bloating that is persistent
- E**- Eating less and feeling full quickly
- A**- Abdominal pain or pelvic pain
- T**- Trouble with your bladder and bowels

There is Currently NO Test for Ovarian Cancer.

Understanding Ovarian Cancer



Dr. Lisa Barroilhet, M.D. and Dr. Manish S. Patankar, PhD.

Division of Gynecologic Oncology,
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Epithelial ovarian cancer is classified as either Type I or Type II disease. Clear cell carcinoma and low grade endometrioid ovarian cancer are prominent subtypes of Type I ovarian cancer and high grade serous cancer constitutes 80-90% of Type II cancers. This classification is based on the predominant mutations observed within the cancer cells. For example, ARID1A is the gene most likely to be mutated in clear cell ovarian cancer. On the other hand, mutations in the p53 gene are hallmarks of high grade serous ovarian cancer. Not only are these tumors different in terms of their mutations, they also arise from different locations. Previous dogma was that epithelial tumors arise from a single layer of epithelial cells that surround the ovaries.

While this may still be the case in some high grade serous tumors, in approximately 50-60% of the cases, the high grade serous ovarian tumors originate from the epithelial cells of the fallopian tube. In contrast, clear cell and low grade endometrioid tumors likely originate from endometriomas, benign but painful abnormal growths that affect approximately 10% of all women. The abnormal cells from the fallopian tubes or the endometrium migrate and implant on the surface of the ovary or on the abdominal tissues and develop into cancer.

These observations indicate that some of the tumors that we classify as “ovarian tumors” may actually not originate from the ovaries. This is an important clarification as we research strategies for diagnosis and treatment of the different types of ovarian cancers. A diagnostic test or therapy that may work well with high grade serous tumors may not necessarily show positive results against clear cell or low grade endometrioid ovarian tumors. Laboratory and clinical researchers are now using this new knowledge to develop distinct strategies that are specific for a particular type of ovarian cancer.

#1
cause of
gynecological
cancer deaths

5th
cause of cancer-
related deaths in
women

22,280
New cases diagnosed
each year

Every 24
Minutes
another woman is
diagnosed with
ovarian cancer in
the U.S.

Photo inspired by <https://ocrfa.org/>

Survivor Spotlight

Mary Ann
Johnson



Pictured Above (L to R)
Joanie Shawhan, Kathy Brimmer, and Mary Ann Johnson

I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in late February 2009 (8 years ago) at age 57. In early March, I had an optimal debulking surgery revealing Stage 3-C papillary serous epithelial carcinoma. Between April and August, I received the standard of care chemo with Carboplatin and Taxol. After a CT scan declaring “NED” (those beautiful 3 words – no evidence of disease), I was offered the opportunity to participate in a clinical research trial looking at the possible benefits of maintenance chemo therapy following standard chemo. Being an enthusiastic supporter of research, I jumped at the chance. I received once a month treatment for a year.

At the time of diagnosis I worked at UW Hospital and Clinics as a cancer registry technician (translation; my job was to abstract –gather diagnosis and treatment data on all patients seen at UW’s Carbone Cancer Center). I ended up being a statistic of our registry – very surreal. I was so fortunate to have a Comprehensive Cancer Center and a gynecologic oncology team of physicians, other providers and support staff literally “in my back yard”. I knew I would have the best possible care and I completely trusted each and every one of them.

Up to the time of my diagnosis, the only woman I knew personally who had ovarian cancer was my mother-in-law, Lillian. That was back in 1998 when OC was known as “The Silent Killer”. We lost her just 8 months after her diagnosis.

“The Gifts of Cancer” – sounds strange, but so true! I have been blessed with a bounty of gifts that would not have come my way if not for this disease. Most of all, the numerous other OC survivors and their families – so many wonderful new friends and close relationships with those who share a common thread in their lives. Of course, WOCA – I found their website on a list of resources. Little did I know what a great organization I’d discover and more new friends! I was drawn to their “Survivors Teaching Students – Saving Women’s Lives” ® (STS) program. I passionately believe as a survivor, I can turn my experience with OC into something positive – educating and bringing awareness to our future health care providers. Little did I know just how rewarding these presentations would be and how many other survivors (lovely ladies) would share their dedication and time to make this program a success. I became the Madison STS facilitator last fall when our dear friend, Laura Clark-Hansen, “passed the baton” to me shortly before her passing. We’ve all pledged to continue Laura’s STS legacy.

I love this quote (by our former Lt Gov Barbara Lawton and think it sums up WOCA’s mission beautifully – many women (survivors and staff) working together to accomplish big goals;

“Women are like snowflakes. Alone we melt – But together, we stop traffic!”



Healthy habits may cut cancer risks!

The results of a study released this summer have confirmed what doctors—and most Americans—have known for decades: Specific changes in lifestyle may help reduce your risk of getting certain cancers. Cut back on alcohol. Quit smoking. Exercise, and lose some weight. These are all sound steps that may not only cut your cancer risk, but may reduce your chances of developing heart disease, diabetes and other health problems. “Fundamental lifestyle changes with diet and exercise by far produce the greatest effects on health and wellness than any other pill out there,” says Dr. Eugene Ahn, Hematologist/Oncologist at our hospital near Chicago.

Researchers at Harvard Medical School studied the lifestyles of about 135,000 Americans, broken into two groups: those with healthy lifestyles and those with unhealthy lifestyles. Subjects with healthy lifestyles were defined as non-smokers and moderate drinkers who exercise regularly and have a body mass index (BMI) of 18.5 to 27.5. The researchers found that cancer risk may be reduced by up to 40 percent by adopting a healthy lifestyle, and that half of cancer deaths may be attributed to bad habits. “A substantial cancer burden may be prevented through lifestyle modification,” the study’s authors, Drs. Mingyang Song and Edward Giovannucci, write. “Prevention should remain a priority for cancer control.” The study also found that risks for specific cancers, including lung, breast, colorectal, pancreatic and bladder, are reduced by living healthier.

“The funny thing is that people say it is too time- and resource-intensive to teach these things, but actually, it is far more cost-effective to teach and promote these elements of health than it is to spend money on drugs,” Dr. Ahn says. “But on a cultural and political level, we simply haven’t caught up to the evidence.” That evidence is pretty clear. Decades of research have linked an increased cancer risk to certain bad habits, such as:

Smoking: Tobacco products kill nearly 500,000 Americans every year and are the most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Tobacco smoke contains dozens of carcinogens, and smoking has been linked to several cancers, including lung and head and neck cancers. Still, as of 2014, about 40 million adults continued to smoke, most of them every day, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Excessive alcohol: Drinking accounted for nearly 90,000 deaths a year, according to the CDC. And about 18,000 cancer deaths per year are linked to alcohol, the National Cancer Institute reports. Alcohol abuse has been linked to cancer of the esophagus, head and neck, liver, colon and breast. Yet about 17 million adults abused alcohol on some level in 2014, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Obesity: Considered a factor in as many as one in 10 new cancer cases each year, obesity produces hormones and growth factors that research suggests may promote tumor growth. Fat cells sometimes also excrete chemicals that may damage DNA. Obesity increases the risk factors for breast, colorectal, pancreatic and other cancers. Nearly 80 million American adults, or about 35 percent of the population, are considered obese, according to the CDC.

“The next great innovation in health is understanding the psychosocial components of why people have difficulty accepting and adopting such lifestyle changes,” Dr. Ahn says. “We have to look at society as a whole. To paraphrase a wise man (philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti), ‘It is not a measure of good health to be well-adjusted to a sick society.’”



Winning the fight against cancer, every day.*



This is the 5th Year of Crafts & Drafts and we can't think of a better way to kick off Milwaukee Beer Week! At Crafts & Drafts, you'll have a chance to try different beers from an amazing array of breweries, as well as being able to chat with brewery owners, brewmasters, and brewery representatives.

Event Information:

When: April 23rd, 2017

Where: Serb Hall
5101 W. Oklahoma Ave
Milwaukee WI, 53219

Time: TEAL & VIP: Noon- 5:00pm
General Admission: 2:00pm-5:00pm

Details: TEAL: \$80 advance/ ONLINE ONLY- LIMITED AMOUNT
VIP: \$70 Advance / \$75 At The Door
General: \$55 Advance / \$60 At The Door

For more information visit: <http://www.craftsanddrafts.org/>

This event is hosted by All Community Events. It is a 5k/10k chip timed run. A portion of the proceeds benefit the Wisconsin Ovarian Cancer Alliance.

May 14th, 2017



Milwaukee: Veteran's Park
1750 N. Lincoln Memorial Drive
Milwaukee WI, 53202

For more information visit: <http://milwaukee mothersday5k.com/>

Madison: Olin Park
1156 Olin-Turville Ct
Madison, WI 53715

For more information visit: <http://www.madisonmothersday5k.com/>

Support Groups

Circle of Courage

(Encouraging those diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer)

Saturday, April 29th at 9:00am

Tuesday, June 20th at 7:00pm

Caring for the Caregiver

Looking to connect with individuals that know what it is like to care for a loved one during and/or after their diagnosis

Thursday, June 8th at 11:00am

Monday, August 7th at 4:00pm

Saturday, December 2nd at 9:00am

Teal in Need

In Honor of the Cathy Mislinski
Legacy Gift.

While we realize the financial burden that can come about due to ovarian cancer, WOCA's "Teal In Need" campaign focuses on financially assisting ovarian cancer patients while they are currently undergoing treatment or finished treatment within the past 6 months. WOCA defines "treatment" as: chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, clinical trials, and/or therapy/program regimen.

WOCA's Mentorship Program

Our mentorship program pairs women who may just be starting their journey with Ovarian Cancer, with someone who may be a bit further along. Please contact the WOCA office if you would like additional information 262-797-7804, or fill out an application and send it to friends@wisconsinovariancancer.org.

Survivors Teaching Students®: Saving Women's Lives

Survivors Teaching Students(R): Saving Women's Lives brings ovarian cancer survivors into medical school classrooms to share their stories and key information about the disease. The program is now in more than 250 medical schools around the country as well as in a number of nurse practitioner, nursing and physician assistant training programs. In Wisconsin the program can be found at University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, The Medical College of Wisconsin, Meriter, and UW Madison.

2017 Calendar of Events

5th Annual Crafts and Drafts- Spring Beer Fest

Sunday, April 23rd, 2017 - Milwaukee, WI

11th Annual Survivor's Brunch (By Invitation Only)

Sunday, April 30th, 2017 - Milwaukee, WI

12th Annual WOCA's Nancy's Run, Rock, and Stroll

Saturday, September 9th, 2017
Greenfield Park - West Allis

4th Annual WOCA's Whisper Walk

Sunday, September 24th, 2017
McKee Farms Park- Fitchburg

Please continue to check our website for
upcoming events and registration details!

Interested in getting involved?

We have some upcoming
volunteer opportunities listed below!
Please find more information about
the event and how to register as a
volunteer on our website @
www.wisconsinovariancancer.org.

Crafts and Drafts- Spring Beer Fest

Sunday, April 23rd, 2017
(10am - 7pm)

Serb Hall - Milwaukee, WI

All Community Events- Mother's Day 5K

Sunday, May 14th, 2017
(6:45am - 10am)

Milwaukee, WI - Veterans Park

Madison, WI - Olin Park

WOCA OFFICE:

13825 W. National Ave. Suite 103
New Berlin, WI, 53151
PHONE- 262-797-7804

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday- Thursday-8am-4pm
Friday- 8am-12pm

WEBSITE:

www.wisconsinovariancancer.org

EMAIL:

friends@wisconsinovariancancer.org

Connect with us on Social Media!

Facebook -

Wisconsin Ovarian Cancer Alliance

Twitter -

@WIOvarianCancer

Instagram -

WI_OVARIAN_CANCER_ALLIANCE

LinkedIn -

Wisconsin Ovarian Cancer Alliance

For Board Member Information,
please visit our website.