

New Medical Oncologist at Rome Memorial Hospital Brings Hope to Cancer Patients

ROME (October 2003) – Anyone who has ever had cancer knows that it can be a very difficult and frightening experience. Medical Oncologist John J. Gullo, MD, who recently joined the medical staff at Rome Memorial Hospital, helps cancer patients find hope at a time when they need it the most.

Dr. Gullo, who has over 27 years of experience as a medical oncologist, has opened an infusion center at Chestnut Commons, 107 East Chestnut Street, where patients can receive chemotherapy and infusion therapy in convenient, comfortable surroundings. The founder of Hematology Oncology Associates of Central New York who currently heads a staff of 12 medical oncologists, Dr. Gullo specializes in the treatment of cancer and blood disorders from active treatment to remission. One of his partners, Dr. Richard Cherny, is also caring for patients at this location.

As with any doctor treating patients, his challenge is to gain patients trust as both their doctor and their advocate. “I think patients need an understanding of what they are going through,” he said. “I show them that I care about them, understand their problems and give them options.”

One of Dr. Gullo’s goals is to help patients become educated about clinical trials and the advancements in cancer treatment. A clinical assistant professor of medicine at SUNY Health Science Center, Syracuse, Dr. Gullo and his group belong to several cancer research groups to explore new options for cancer treatment and prevention. He said that there are only around 55 medical groups in the United States that are funded and approved by the National Cancer Institute to administer clinical trials to cancer patients.

“Five to ten percent of our patients are in clinical trials. We are offering them newer or advanced therapy that may not be available in Central New York,” he said. What this means to cancer patients in Rome and surrounding communities is that they have options, said Dr. Gullo. This is a definite advantage to anyone fighting the battle of cancer. Most of the clinical trials will be administered at the Rome office but “some of the more complex procedures may need to be administered at my Syracuse office,” he added, saying that that will most likely be a very small percentage of patients.

Dr. Gullo said that there were several factors that resulted in his decision to practice medicine in Rome. “A lot of my decision to practice here has to do with the community – the doctor-base here is excellent,” he said. “I have worked with some of the surgeons. They do a good job. They care about their patients,” he said. Chemotherapy is often combined with radiation therapy and/or surgical procedures as part of an overall cancer treatment plan.

Dr. Gullo said that he will also be working closely with board certified radiation oncologist Linda Schicker, M.D., whose practice is also located at the Chestnut Commons site. “Our goal is to try to keep as much care within the community as

possible,” he said. “Our model is to have a more comprehensive center so that patients can be seen easily,” he said.

“I’m thrilled that Dr. Gullo is providing medical oncology services to the community of Rome,” said Dr. Schicker. “In particular, his group’s involvement in clinical trials is a great asset to our community,” she added.

A graduate of SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, Dr. Gullo is board certified in internal medicine and medical oncology. He received specialty training at SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse and the Vincent T. Lombardi Cancer Research Center, Division of Oncology, at the Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C. Dr. Gullo, who was born and raised in Oneida, was the first board certified oncologist in private practice in Syracuse.

Dr. Gullo said that he became a medical oncologist because “I found it very stimulating from a scientific standpoint. I like the problem-solving aspect as well.” At the time that Dr. Gullo entered the field of medical oncology, it was a fairly new specialty with major advancements taking place during the past 25 years.

Dr. Gullo was a member of the board of directors of the Mid-Atlantic Oncology Program and a member of the board of directors of the Mid-Atlantic Cancer Research Foundation; chairman of medical oncology at the Onondaga County Medical Society; a member of the Gastrointestinal Cancer Sub-Committee, Mid-Atlantic Oncology Program; and co-principle investigator of the Central New York Community Clinical Oncology Program.

Dr. Gullo resides in Jamesville and has three children: Lauren, 27, who is pursuing a master’s degree in education; Stephen, 24, a commercial real estate investor in Boston; and Jeffrey, a senior at Manlius Pebble Hill School in Dewitt.

Dr. Gullo is accepting new patients and can be reached by calling 339-5783.