

Newport Hospital Connection

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2020

Spine Center Helps Josy Get Back in the Game!

When 90-year-old Josy Wright isn't on the go with family and friends, the Jamestown resident is busy gardening, making prints or paintings. "I'm not a person who's ok sitting in front of a computer or TV all day," she says. "I just don't like to sit."

So, when back pain threatened to hamper her lifestyle, Josy headed to Newport Hospital to do something about it. An evaluation and imaging tests revealed Josy had a vertebral compression fracture of the spine. Dr. Alexios Carayannopoulos, medical director of the Newport Hospital Comprehensive Spine Center and chief of the hospital's new department of physical medicine and rehabilitation, performed a balloon kyphoplasty on her to repair it.

"This is a minimally invasive procedure where we place tubes into the compressed area of the vertebra, one on each side, through which we insert special balloons and inflate them to gently raise the fractured bone back to its normal position," he explains. "Once in place, the balloons are deflated and fast-hardening cement is injected into the cavity created by the balloons to restore the compressed vertebra to a more normal height, which stops progression of the fracture, stabilizes the spine, and quickly relieves pain."

For Josy, this worked very well. "I walked into the hospital at 9 in the morning and walked out at 3 in the afternoon, then walked upstairs when I got home" she recalls. "I was pain-free and back to normal life in no time."

Kyphoplasty and many other routine and complex spine/back procedures have been done every day at Newport Hospital since a satellite of the Comprehensive Spine Center at Rhode Island Hospital opened there two years



Josy Wright

ago. Increasing access to care on Aquidneck Island was important, because 25 percent of the patients at the Rhode Island Hospital center travelled there from greater Newport.

The center takes a patient-centered, collaborative approach, and works closely with colleagues from a variety of disciplines to ensure the best outcomes and a continuity of care. "We provide the majority of diagnostic and treatment options at Newport Hospital as we do in Providence, and we pride ourselves as having the most comprehensive treatment paradigm in the state," Dr. Carayannopoulos points out.

"I really want to get the word out about the Spine Center here," Josy says, "especially for older people like me who may be more susceptible to spinal problems. They have wonderful doctors, nurses and support staff here and it's one of the many things that make Newport Hospital a five-star hospital in my mind!"

Dr. Carayannopoulos adds that donor generosity helped grow the center's Newport footprint, and he is grateful for the support.

The Best in Cancer Care, Close to Home

Few words are more frightening to hear than, “you have cancer.” Instantly, your world is turned upside down. Your mind floods with unimaginable thoughts, fears, and questions. For Aquidneck Island residents, one thing they don’t have to wonder about is where to go for their care.

“We want people to realize the breadth of what’s here and the importance of having leading-edge, patient-centered cancer care so close to home,” says Kim McDonough, RN, BSN, OCN, CN-BN, clinical manager of the Lifespan Cancer Institute at Newport Hospital.

It’s been five years since David Gordon, former mayor of Newport, was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer that had spread to his neck. Under the care of renowned hematology oncologist Alessandro Papa, MD, David underwent surgery at Newport Hospital, followed by three months of chemotherapy.

“At Newport Hospital—and anywhere in the Lifespan system—patients have access to groundbreaking new immunotherapies and other emerging treatments across many cancer types.”

— Susan Korber, Vice President,
Lifespan Cancer Institute

“My body didn’t respond well to the chemo,” recalls David. “That’s when Dr. Papa discussed a newly approved immunotherapy infusion treatment with me. I was so grateful to hear something like that was available to me.”

“At Newport Hospital—and anywhere in the Lifespan system—patients have access to groundbreaking new



immunotherapies and other emerging treatments across many cancer types,” says Susan Korber, MS, RN, OCN, NE-BC, Vice President, Lifespan Cancer Institute.

Over a three-year period, David returned to Newport Hospital every few weeks to receive his infusions. In 2018, a PET scan showed the cancer was gone from his lungs, but that David now had lymphoma. He would undergo radiation, followed by a second immunotherapy drug.

For David, living just a short drive from the hospital was “like medicine itself.”

“I don’t even want to think about what it would have been like to not get my care at Newport Hospital,” he says. “Being close to home takes away a lot of the worry and anxiety you already have.”

This past January, after being off treatment for five months, David had a PET scan and received the news he hoped to hear. His images looked great—his cancer was in remission, and his outlook strong.

“I can’t say enough about cancer care at Newport Hospital, Dr. Papa, his team, and all the nurses,” smiles David. “I feel very fortunate to be here today.”

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