



**UNC** HEALTH<sup>®</sup>

Pardee

Cancer Annual Report **2023**

Pardee Cancer Center combines high quality care with innovation to provide cancer treatment that is uniquely tailored to your needs.

As the only comprehensive cancer center in Henderson

County, our team of caring physicians, nurses, navigators, and staff helps you understand your diagnosis, your treatment options and the entire process in between. We have earned national accreditations from these prestigious organizations:



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**Cover Art: *Running the End of the Fast*  
by artist Tim Jones**

*Running the End of the Fast* is placed in Pardee Cancer Center, providing beauty and inspiration to our patients. Our patients selected this artwork as the cover for this year's report.

# Chairman's REPORT

JOHN K. HILL, MD



The past year for Pardee Cancer Center has, once again, been characterized by significant growth and quite a few new faces. Of course, since we, and our patients, have only recently been able to take off our protective masks and continue to understand our new normal in the era of COVID, most faces have seemed new to a lot of us recently. We are, in many cases, just now seeing some of our patients' full faces for the first time, and likewise they are seeing our full faces for the first time. I think we all now can appreciate, to a much greater degree, the value of a smiling face.

At last count, our cancer case load for 2022 was close to 800 newly diagnosed cancers, which is certainly an all time high for our program. This has been fueled not only by the ongoing influx of people moving into our area, but also by the fact that we are becoming known as a regional leader in cancer care. Our program is drawing patients not only from Henderson County, but from all adjacent counties in western North Carolina and from upstate South Carolina. We are constantly amazed that we have patients who will drive through larger, neighboring cities to seek care at Pardee Cancer Center. We certainly believe that this is a testament to the quality of every member of our team.

With the anticipation that we will also see the complexity of our cases increase, we were thrilled that Pardee was able to fund installation of the da Vinci Surgical System, or "the robot," as we often like to call it. This step truly puts us on a level playing field with any major medical center who treats cancer patients.

My role has evolved in the past year, as I accepted the chairmanship of the Cancer Committee at Pardee. It was

an honor for me to take on this leadership position because of the great respect I have for my coworkers and the passion I continue to have, after 20 years in this practice, for our patients. I was initially concerned that at this stage of my career, I might not want to take on what seemed to me to be a huge responsibility. However, I have discovered that I am blessed to have an administration at Pardee who values the work that we do, colleagues who support one another and provide the best medical care I have ever seen, the best cancer registrar on the planet, and a team of nurses, navigators, medical assistants, and front desk staff that daily amaze me with their passion and resilience.

*"We are constantly amazed that we have patients who drive through larger, neighboring cities to seek care at Pardee Cancer Center."*

With the growth in our patient load, we have added several team members. Dr. Srinath Sundararaman has joined our Radiation Oncology department and Dr. Sukhmani Gill has joined our medical oncology and hematology team. After many years of need, we have added a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Christie Manning, to our navigation team, filling a huge gap in our spectrum of patient care, focusing on the psychosocial needs of our patients, which can be overwhelming. These new voices have also contributed significantly to the excellent case presentations and discussions at our weekly Cancer Conferences, which continue to be very well attended by all care disciplines.

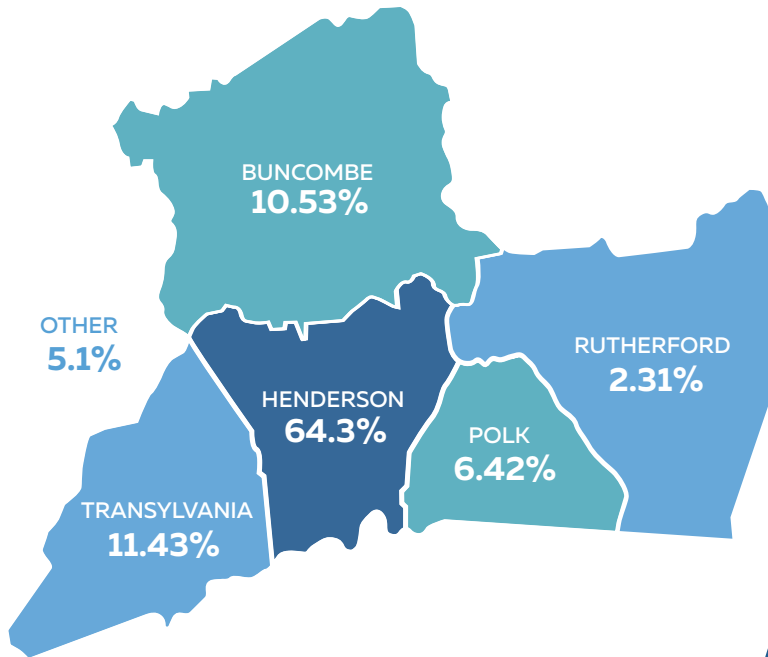
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The top five types of cancers that Pardee treats are breast, lung, colon, prostate, and bladder. We look to continue to strengthen our ability to treat these and all cancers with the latest advances in surgery, medical therapeutics, radiation therapy, and supportive care.

This includes a continued commitment to a strong Cancer Research Program, which currently is enrolling to over 30 clinical trials, giving our patients the opportunity to receive cutting-edge treatment without leaving home. Since our hope is that one day we might live in a world without cancer, we focus a great deal on community outreach and education regarding cancer screening and early detection. We have held several skin cancer screening events for the community at large, our Pardee teammates, and at two

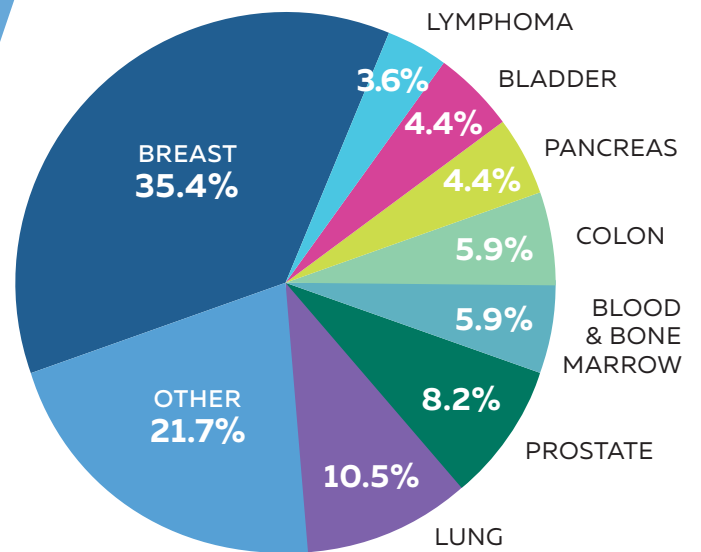
large local businesses. A prostate cancer screening event for the community included free PSA testing, graciously funded by the Pardee Hospital Foundation. We also provided a free mammography screening for the community in October.

Lastly, we are thrilled that, after a three-year hiatus, we were able to host the annual Pardee Cancer Center Talent Show, where staff members volunteered – or in some cases be coerced – to sing and/or dance just for the pleasure and enjoyment of our patients. This is something that we all deeply enjoy and have thoroughly missed. This type of thing may seem trivial, but for our patients, who can often feel overwhelmed by the seemingly constant battle that they fight each day, a little laughter may be what keeps them going. ♦



COUNTIES OF RESIDENCE

TOP CANCER SITES





# Mammo on the Go Hits the Road

In May 2023, Pardee officially launched our mobile mammography program, Mammo on the Go, a Department of Pardee Hospital. We are thankful for all the generous support from our donors, especially Kenmure Fights Cancer, who have been longtime supporters of our cancer program.

The state-of-the-art mobile unit offers digital 3D breast imaging and early detection services to women in Buncombe, Henderson, Polk, and Transylvania counties. The bus is staffed by specially trained female mammographers who have a unique understanding of breast imaging and the importance of early detection. As always, our board-certified radiologists interpret all images, quickly communicating results with a patient's referring physician.

"Many women report missing their annual exam because they are too busy, cannot take time off work, or don't have access to a nearby screening location," said Dr. Jennifer McAlister, breast surgical oncologist. "We're excited to offer our mobile mammography to make it more convenient for patients to receive these important screenings."

With Mammo on the Go, patients never have to sacrifice time, quality, or Pardee's full-service care. Whether receiving a screening on the mobile unit or at the breast center, patients experience the same personalized and timely care. The bus is equipped with state-of-the-art technology that offers advances in comfort and accuracy from mammograms to breast cancer care. This includes the SmartCurve System, which provides curved paddles specifically designed for more comfortable compression during breast imaging. If an issue is detected from the exam, Pardee provides follow-up and scheduling for additional imaging.

Mammo on the Go is now available for site visits to businesses, organizations, and special events across Western North Carolina. To learn more about scheduling an appointment or to request a site visit, go to [MammoOnTheGo.com](https://www.MammoOnTheGo.com). ♦



# From Cancer Clinic to Renowned Cancer Center

REFLECTING ON DECADES OF SERVICE AND GROWTH

A cancer diagnosis is a pivotal and heartbreaking moment for a patient, completely upending their life. At UNC Health Pardee, we understand the emotional, mental and physical challenges a patient deals with as they face the disease. More importantly, we understand that being close to home and near a support system can make a valuable difference in a patient's cancer journey. That understanding and a commitment to investing in patient-focused cancer care are key factors in the success of our program, spanning decades in our community and serving countless patients.

## A history of compassionate care

For more than 20 years, Pardee has invested in cancer services through a robust cancer research program, the creation of a comprehensive cancer center and innovative technology. But at the heart of it all are our people – a highly-trained and deeply committed team of specialists and caregivers.

Cancer care at Pardee began in 1993 with the opening of the Kayden Radiation Oncology Center. Retired oncologist and Order of the Longleaf Pine recipient, Dr. James Radford, established Pardee's Cancer Research Program in 1999 with the intent of moving beyond a treatment-only focus. Dr. Radford remained the principal investigator for over 22 years and said creating the program felt like it was his duty and a way to make life better for people. He wanted to "move the field forward" for his kids, grandkids and everyone else.

The clinical trials programs at Pardee, through which patients can access a large number of national and international clinical trials of new cancer therapies, began with only Dr. Radford and one research nurse, Karen Morris.

Morris ultimately became the Cancer Research Coordinator for the program which has grown to four researchers, maintaining 50 to 55 open studies since the program's inception.

## Commitment to quality

Pardee has continuously earned accreditation from the Commission on Cancer (CoC) for meeting quality care standards and maintaining levels of excellence in the delivery of integrated, comprehensive patient-centered care. As an accredited breast center through the National Accreditation Program for Breast Cancers (NAPBC), Pardee also provides patients with the support of a multidisciplinary group of healthcare professionals who are committed to working together to use their specialties to provide the best possible care. A commitment to uphold these standards every three years is evidence of Pardee's goal to provide high-quality, compassionate care.

## Expansion of services

Pardee has spent the last several years expanding its cancer services team and upgrading its facilities, as it strives to provide patients with the care they need and the technology they deserve. From front desk staff to oncologists, Pardee is focused on providing patients more efficient and high-quality cancer care.

Our High-Risk Breast Clinic identifies patients who are at high risk for breast cancer. Women with a family history of breast cancer may be at greater risk; yearly screening mammograms may not be sufficient for early breast cancer detection. In our dedicated high-risk clinic, the team can perform comprehensive risk assessments to determine a

1993

Kayden Radiation  
Oncology Center opens



1999

Pardee establishes  
cancer research program



2007

Elizabeth Reilly Breast  
Center opens



# Cancer Screenings and Early Detection

CAROL BROWN

Screening for cancer is very important. If cancer is detected early, it often can be treated more successfully. Knowing your family history and other risk factors is also very important so that your providers know which screenings are needed, and at what age to recommend those screenings.

The Pardee Cancer Center team held several cancer screening and early detection events this year. The events included two prostate cancer screenings for the community as well as a free mammography night in October for under insured women. Pardee @Work also provided free skin cancer screenings for Pardee employees.

At these events, participants not only get a screening exam, but they are also provided informational materials for themselves and to share with family and friends. Many of our providers are such advocates for screenings that they volunteered their time to assist. One of Pardee's newer screening programs includes Low Dose Lung CT scans for patients who are smokers or who have a history of smoking. Pardee did 1,076 screening lung CT scans in 2022.

Our new mobile mammography unit, Mammo on the Go, will also enable Pardee to take screening mammograms to our community, businesses, schools, and more. This is a great example of Pardee's commitment to screening efforts in the communities that we serve.

In 2022, 36 percent of the cancers diagnosed and treated at Pardee were detected on routine screening exams. This shows that our providers, our screening programs, and events are reaching our community members and hopefully will make a positive impact on survival and will raise awareness of how important cancer screenings are and why they are important. ♦

patient's lifetime risk for being diagnosed with breast cancer. This information helps to inform and guide future imaging, genetic testing options and clinical follow-up to yield the best breast health for each patient.

## Innovative technology

With generous support from many donors, most notably Kenmure Fights Cancer, Pardee has improved access and treatment for cancer patients. Pardee's breast imaging is equipped with contrast-enhanced mammography (CEM) software, another tool to help with the early detection of breast cancer. If a patient has an abnormality on a mammogram or ultrasound, specialists can use this software to further investigate the issue.

To aid in better detection and treatment of certain tumors, Pardee invested in two new specialty tracers for PET scans, one for prostate cancer and one for neuroendocrine tumors. These tracers target specific areas of concern in the scanning process which equates to more appropriate treatments.

Most recently, Pardee launched its mobile mammography program, Mammo on the Go, offering state-of-the-art, digital 3D breast imaging and early detection services to women in Buncombe, Henderson, Polk and Transylvania counties. It's staffed by specially trained female mammographers certified in breast imaging. All images are interpreted by board-certified radiologists.

## Here for you

From the start, Pardee has envisioned providing cancer patients access to care that's close to home. With the investment in cancer care technology, treatment options, and highly-trained and compassionate staff, we've seen that come to fruition, as thousands of patients have recovered from cancer and their lives have been saved. ♦



2016

Pardee Cancer Center opens

2023

Mammo on the Go launches

# Volunteering at the Cancer Center

TERRY FELLIN, PARDEE CANCER CENTER VOLUNTEER SERVICES CHAIR

I am a very grateful cancer survivor thanks to the excellent clinical care delivered with compassion by the outstanding Pardee staff members, as well as the support of the Breast Cancer Navigator and the Breast Friends Forever support group.

Because of the excellent care I received at Pardee, my husband and I wanted to give back to others who were dealing with a cancer diagnosis and treatment, as well as provide any help we could to the nurses, physicians, and staff. We were among the first people who signed up to volunteer at Pardee Cancer Center after it was opened.

Most of Pardee Cancer Center's volunteers have been touched by cancer, either personally or through family or friends, and feel strongly that they want to help provide comfort to the patients. Each volunteer has committed to be at the cancer center for regularly scheduled shifts, as well as filling in for other volunteers as needed.

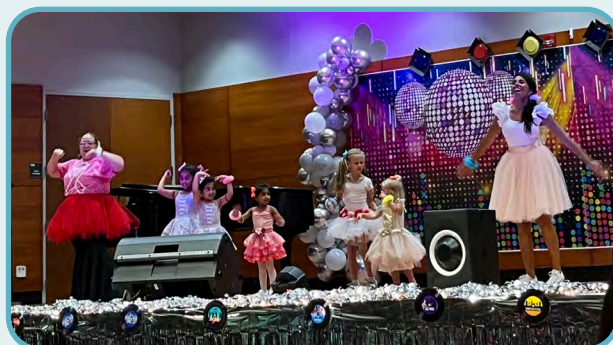
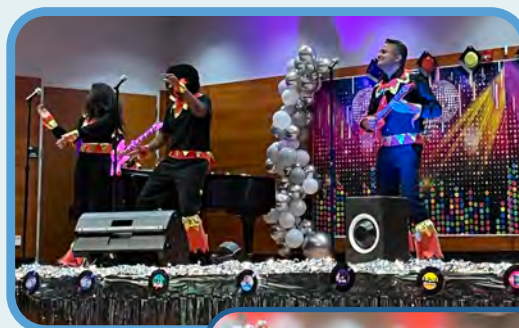
Volunteers keep refreshment areas clean and organized while also offering patients a smiling face, snacks, or – maybe best of all – a warm blanket while they are receiving treatments. The volunteers make frequent stops in the two waiting rooms and each of the infusion treatment rooms throughout their shift to see how patients are doing and if they need anything to help them feel more comfortable.

With an increasing number of infusion patients, volunteers are always on the move. While it is a busy time, we can connect with patients and learn about their lives, especially those who are regularly scheduled on our volunteer days.

We appreciate the opportunity Pardee has offered us to work alongside such a talented, dedicated staff. Additionally, we enjoy meeting and getting to know each patient and support person, and they become a part of our lives. We think of them often when we are not volunteering and wish them all the best. It is truly an honor to be even a small part of each patient's survivorship journey. ♦

## Look Back: SURVIVOR TALENT SHOW

The team at Pardee Cancer Center finds that laughter and fun are an important part of the healing journey, and are especially happy to celebrate our cancer survivor patients. One way is through hosting special events, like the annual talent show in September, when our Pardee physicians and staff proved they have impressive skills beyond medicine.



# Ellen Reed

## A CANCER JOURNEY

*“Sometimes it’s overwhelming to think about how different my experience could have been if it wasn’t for Pardee.”*



In the 10 years she worked as a director at UNC Health Pardee from 1995–2005, Ellen Reed spent much of that time as part of a strategic committee that had a goal of one day creating a comprehensive cancer center for the organization. Today, that dream is a reality as Pardee Cancer Center opened its doors in 2016. And while it’s been astonishing to see this vision come to fruition, Ellen never imagined that she’d end up there as a patient.

### The provider becomes the patient

Ellen, 74, an advanced practice nurse, is a profoundly driven woman who worked and traveled well past the “retirement age.” As she finally decided it was time to take a step back and begin to enjoy the golden years of life, life threw her a curveball.

As a clinician, you’re used to taking care of people and not always prepared for a role reversal. In the fall of 2018, Ellen went in for what she thought was a routine hernia surgery but turned out to be one of the most difficult days of her life. “I woke up expecting to hear that I had been healed,” Ellen shared. But the news she got was nothing she could have ever imagined.

You have cancer. Three of the most gut-wrenching words a person can hear. “Just before the surgery, I was thinking about retirement and the next chapter in my life,” Ellen said. Instead, she found herself back at the hospital, but this time as an advanced-stage ovarian cancer patient.

### The fight of her life

“How many years?” That’s the first thing Ellen asked her oncologist, Dr. James Radford, who told her he thought she had about four years to live. “It was like a bullet through my

forehead,” Ellen recalled. “That’s not enough time, I need more time.” What followed was a grueling four years of chemotherapy and immunotherapy treatments. When reflecting on these last several years, Ellen expresses gratitude for Pardee Cancer Center’s team. “The care has been amazing,” she said. “Sometimes it’s overwhelming to think about how different my experience could have been if it wasn’t for Pardee.”

Ellen shared that what’s helped keep her alive this long through this grueling battle is being able to be home and by her family – an option that hasn’t always been available. “It’s wonderful and convenient to be able to have all your care and all your physicians in one place.”

### A legacy of love

Ellen reflects on her journey and cancer battle as she considers the question, what would you do knowing your life will be shortened? “I gave thanks for my many blessings and then began reaching out to family and friends,” Ellen shared. “I was determined to let them know the meaning they brought to my life and expressed my love and appreciation.”

“We’re all going to die,” Ellen said matter of factly. “There’s a beginning and an end, but it’s what you do in the middle that really counts.” Ellen has penned a book and several encouraging articles in hopes to leave her legacy of love and resilience. She says she’s going to spend the time she has left honoring her reason for being here and all of the cancer warriors who stand beside her and do what it takes to stay alive and enjoy life. ♦

# INNOVATION NEWS

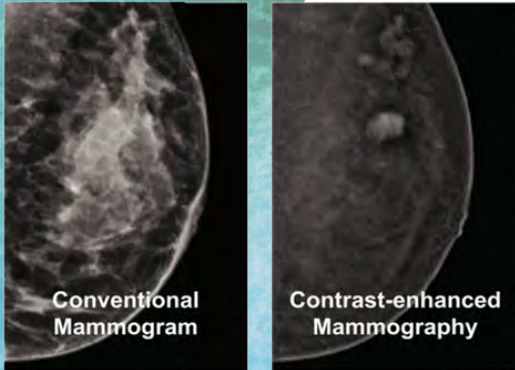


IMAGE CREDIT:  
densebreast-info.org

## Contrast Enhanced Mammography

JOHN MCKAY, MD

UNC Health Pardee is excited to announce the addition of contrast-enhanced mammography (CEM) to our existing 3D mammography units in the breast imaging department.

CEM is an imaging technique that used intravenous contrast in combination with a standard mammogram. Some cancers that are not visible on standard mammograms can be seen with addition of this contrast, particularly in women with dense breast tissue. The contrast used is identical to contrast used for CT scans, but different from contrast agents used in MRI. CEM can be used for same indications as breast MRI which include screening in patients with dense breast tissue and women who have increased risk for developing breast cancer, to assess extent of cancer in women with newly diagnosed breast cancer, and to evaluate breast symptoms or abnormalities seen on mammograms.

An IV is placed into an arm vein for injection of contrast. After injection, the breast is placed in compression and views of each breast are performed like a standard bilateral mammogram. Areas that take up contrast appear white on the images and normal breast tissue appears dark. With CEM, breast cancers take up more contrast and stand out as white against a dark background. This improves contrast and visibility of breast cancers, which can blend in with background normal breast tissue on standard mammograms since both appear white. ♦

## MRI-Ultrasound Fusion Technology

This year, Pardee has added innovative technology to the operating room, which will allow the urologists to collect a biopsy from a patient's prostate with more precision. This fusion technology combines the patients' MRI images with their ultrasound images in real time. This fusion, or blending, of the two images creates a clearer picture to pinpoint any questionable areas in the prostate. MRI-Ultrasound fusion targeted biopsy potentially has greater reproducibility due to less operator dependence by providing real time feedback of actual biopsied locations.

The outpatient procedure consists of two separate sessions to create accurate results. The first step is to have an MRI scan performed, and the second step is in the procedure room where a trained urologist will perform the biopsy and using the ultrasound machine to actively visualize the prostate. These two separate images (MRI/US) are layered to create a 3D image that the urologist can use to manipulate and further investigate the area of interest.

This technology is another example of Pardee investing in its community to better the health outcomes of the patients we serve. ♦



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# Breast Friends Forever

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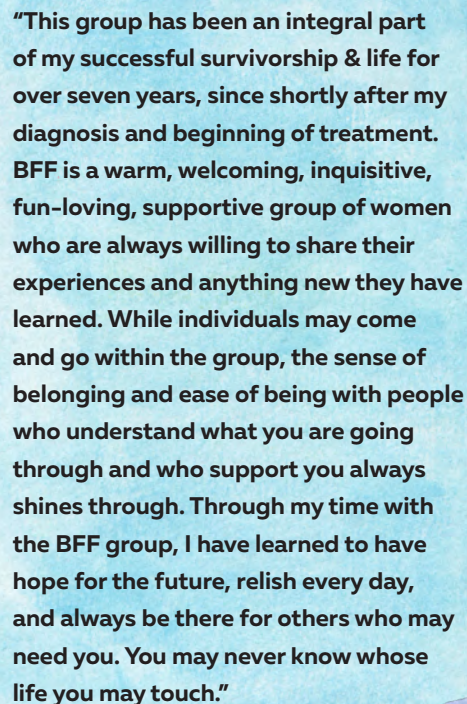
The Breast Friends Forever (BFF) support group at Pardee Cancer Center is a program led by our Breast Care Navigator, Marche' Tucker, BSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA, to provide support to patients with a diagnosis of breast cancer. The group, which meets monthly, is diverse in age, cultural background, and stage of treatment.

While the meetings provide information and support, it's the connections between group members that prove to be the most valuable. While some group members are newly diagnosed, some are over six years into their survivorship. The meetings offer a judgment free, welcoming atmosphere where everyone can find a source of support.


Whether it includes presentations by speakers or doing crafts, meeting at the park or causally talking, the group members find a source of support and build relationships that help carry them through their breast cancer journey. ♦



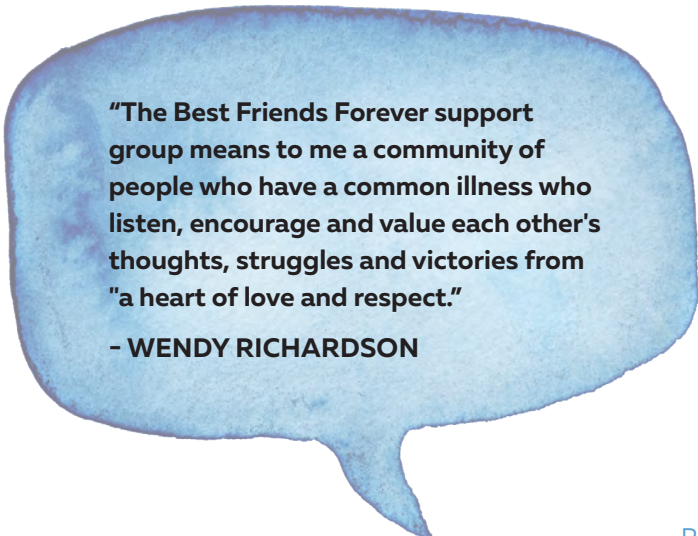
**"The support group meetings are most encouraging. Seeing others and hearing about their experience has helped me feel better about my own experience. And these women are full of life! There is lots of laughter at our gatherings. I'm deeply grateful that such a group is available here in Hendersonville."**



**"This group has been an integral part of my successful survivorship & life for over seven years, since shortly after my diagnosis and beginning of treatment. BFF is a warm, welcoming, inquisitive, fun-loving, supportive group of women who are always willing to share their experiences and anything new they have learned. While individuals may come and go within the group, the sense of belonging and ease of being with people who understand what you are going through and who support you always shines through. Through my time with the BFF group, I have learned to have hope for the future, relish every day, and always be there for others who may need you. You may never know whose life you may touch."**



**"The Pardee Breast Friends Forever support group has been incredibly helpful during my journey through breast surgery, radiation and medical oncology. The opportunity to exchange information with cancer survivors who have been where I am and can answer questions or offer advice and calm fears is priceless."**



**"The Best Friends Forever support group means to me a community of people who have a common illness who listen, encourage and value each other's thoughts, struggles and victories from "a heart of love and respect."**

**- WENDY RICHARDSON**



## Cancer Services Directory

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Main Phone Number	828-694-4300
Advance Directives	828-696-1168
Appointments	828-692-8045 <i>Option 1 for General Option 6 for Infusion</i>
Breast Surgery	828-694-8438
Cancer Research	828-696-4716
Cancer Program Coordinator	828-696-1342
Chaplain	828-696-1168
Clinical Trials	828-696-4716
Pardee Breast Center	828-696-1300
Mammography Scheduling	828-698-7979
Mammography Coordinator	828-696-1305
Medical Records	828-696-1094 828-696-1096
Medical Oncology	828-692-8045
Medication Refills	828-694-8031
Oncology Dietitian	828-698-7992
Nurse Navigator (Breast Care)	828-698-7334
Nurse Navigator (All Other Cancers)	828-698-7317
Physician After-Hours	828-696-1000
Radiation Oncology	828-696-1330
Social Worker	828-698-7364
Speech-Language Pathology	828-698-6774
Surgical Oncology	828-693-7230
Triage	828-694-8031

### Pardee Cancer Center

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[pardeehospital.org](http://pardeehospital.org)