

March 8, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Southwest Florida is not only beautiful climatically, but also spiritually. Every day, I hear stories of how we go above and beyond to help each other.

Most recently **Lynn Hurley**, RN and Certified Breast Navigator shared this beautiful story with Chief Nursing Officer **Michele Thoman** and her team, as our community was recently preparing for the annual 5K Susan G. Komen for the Cure Southwest Florida Race, which will take place this Saturday March 10 at the Coconut Point Mall. (By the way it is not too late to enter the race—(<http://www.komenswfl.org/>.) This is how Lynn told her story:

“The patient is 62, never married. She came to the ER with shortness of breath. Her diagnosis was a blood clot. Upon assessment, the ER doctor found her to have an inflamed breast. He consulted **Dr. David Lamon**, who assessed her and felt she had an aggressive breast cancer. The patient said it had been growing for a year. She confided in Dr. Lamon that she had lost her job at a local department store, had no insurance and was about to be evicted. She was suffering with multiple medical conditions as well as depression. She said she had no way to pay for treatment and was not going to pursue a diagnosis. An intelligent woman, she was overwhelmed by the situation.

“Dr. Lamon asked her if he could contact our breast navigator to talk about resources available to help her. She agreed. Dr. Lamon called me, and I explained to the patient about the Comprehensive Breast Health Program and our relationship with Komen and other community resources. The NCH case manager was wonderful and got the woman approved for Medicaid.

“After speaking with me, the patient agreed to let Dr. Lamon biopsy the breast. His suspicions were true; the woman had breast cancer. The cancer was aggressive, and she was referred to **Dr. Lillian Love** for chemo before surgery. She was in the hospital for two weeks, during which she was, indeed, evicted from her home. I contacted a friend who packed her belongings. Cancer Alliance of Naples (CAN) is also a grantee of Komen and provides housing expenses. While in the hospital, I had her fill out an application and took it to CAN, which approved her for housing.

“Now we needed to find her housing. I spoke to a wonderful friend who rents a condo during season. Her tenant was not due to arrive for two months. The condo is beautiful and is in Park Shore. My friend gets \$3,500 per month for it but agreed to let CAN rent it for \$750 per month, all utilities free.

“So when the patient was discharged from the hospital on a Saturday in early November, she had no idea where she was going to be living. Saturday is my day off, and I picked her up and took her to her new temporary home. Her friend had set up her personal belongings, and healing could begin. This woman was so grateful and humbled by all the love and support. Now, she has only one chemo treatment left and then she will be ready for surgery. She is doing wonderfully.

“Her story proves that when you have a great hospital, great surgeons, great oncologists, an administration that sees the value of the breast health navigator, community resources such as Komen and CAN—together we can and are making a tremendous difference in the lives of women diagnosed with breast cancer.”

There is little I can add to Lynn’s wonderful story but thanks.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P.S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* and ask anyone to email me at allen.weiss@nchmd.org to be added.