



Nov. 17, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Virginia Mason Memorial's Cancer Program Earns National Accreditation with Commendation
from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons**

YAKIMA — The Commission on Cancer (CoC), a quality program of the American College of Surgeons has granted Three-Year Accreditation with Commendation to the cancer program at Virginia Mason Memorial. To earn voluntary CoC accreditation, a cancer program must meet or exceed the CoC quality care standards, be evaluated every three years and maintain levels of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive patient-centered care. Three-Year Accreditation with Commendation is awarded only to a facility that exceeds standard requirements.

Because it is a CoC-accredited cancer center, Virginia Mason Memorial takes a multidisciplinary approach to treating cancer as a complex group of diseases that requires consultation among surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, diagnostic radiologists, pathologists, and other cancer specialists. This multidisciplinary partnership results in improved patient care.

“In over 25 years of working in oncology care, this is the most exciting result I’ve seen from a Commission on Cancer survey,” said Tricia Sinek, senior director of the Oncology Service Line Virginia Mason Memorial. “We received 5 out of a possible 7 commendations for going above and beyond even the toughest requirements. The Commission on Cancer reviews every single part of the cancer program – from accuracy of diagnosis to assuring we treat patients according to the most up-to-date treatment recommendations for surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, measuring our results against the national standards and assessing the skill and expertise of every member of our cancer-care team.

“Yakima is fortunate to have this top-quality cancer program right here in our community. Our entire team is committed to delivering great cancer care — whether at North Star Lodge, Virginia Mason Memorial hospital, `Ohana, in primary care, or through services at Cottage in the Meadow.”

The CoC Accreditation Program provides the framework for Virginia Mason Memorial to improve its quality of patient care through various cancer-related programs that focus on the full spectrum of cancer care including prevention, early diagnosis, cancer staging, optimal treatment, rehabilitation, life-long follow-up for recurrent disease and end-of-life care. When patients receive care at a CoC facility, they also have access to information on clinical trials and new treatments, genetic counseling, and patient centered services including psycho-social support, a patient navigation process, and a survivorship care plan that documents the care each patient receives and seeks to improve cancer survivors' quality of life.

Like all CoC-accredited facilities, Virginia Mason Memorial maintains a cancer registry and contributes data to the National Cancer Data Base (NCDB), a joint program of the CoC and American Cancer Society. This nationwide oncology outcomes database is the largest clinical disease registry in the world. Data on all types of cancer are tracked and analyzed through the NCDB and used to explore trends in cancer care. CoC-accredited cancer centers, in turn, have access to information derived from this type of data analysis, which is used to create national, regional, and state benchmark reports. These reports help CoC facilities with their quality improvement efforts.

The American Cancer Society estimates that more than 1.6 million cases of cancer will be diagnosed in 2016. There are currently more than 1,500 CoC-accredited cancer programs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. CoC-accredited facilities diagnose and/or treat more than 70 percent of all newly diagnosed cancer patients. When cancer patients choose to seek care locally at a CoC-accredited cancer center, they are gaining access to comprehensive, state-of-the-art cancer care close to home. The CoC provides the public with information on the resources, services, and cancer treatment experience for each CoC-accredited cancer program through the CoC Hospital Locator at <https://www.facs.org/search/cancer-programs>.

Established in 1922 by the American College of Surgeons, the CoC is a consortium of professional organizations dedicated to improving patient outcomes and quality of life for cancer patients through standard-setting, prevention, research, education, and the monitoring of comprehensive, quality care. Its membership includes Fellows of the American College of Surgeons. For more information visit: www.facs.org/cancer

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