



ENGLEWOOD HEALTH

November 2019

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

With November being Lung Cancer Awareness Month, I am pleased to share with you updates on the lung cancer program at The Lefcourt Family Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center, and how we can be of service to your patients facing this challenging disease.

As you know, lung cancer is responsible for more deaths every year than the next three leading causes of cancer mortality combined. Despite vigorous educational campaigns to reduce cigarette smoking, there has been little impact on the number of patients with new lung cancer diagnosed each year. In 2019, the American Cancer Society estimates over 228,000 new cases of lung cancer in the United States will be diagnosed, resulting in 142,000 deaths.

Early Detection

As in other common forms of cancer care, such as breast, colon, and prostate, early detection is the key to improving survival, by identifying cancers at an early stage, when localized therapy is more likely to be effective. Several large multinational prospective studies have definitively shown that low dose CT screening in high-risk patients improves survival. Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2011, the North American Low Dose CT Screening Trial (NLST) demonstrated a 20% reduction in deaths due to lung cancer in patients who had such a screening. In a recently published European study, the results were even better. Mortality from lung cancer was reduced by 25% in high risk patients who underwent sequential low dose CT screening.

We have been performing low dose CT scans for lung cancer early detection since 2014 with great success. As part of our commitment to our community, we are offering a free screening for qualified patients on Thursday, November 21, in recognition of the Great American Smokeout Day. This means that any qualifying patient with a prescription from you, their physician, can schedule their low dose lung screening. To be eligible, a patient must be between 55 and 80, with a 30 pack-year history (3 packs a day for 10 years, 2 packs a day for 15 years, etc), and have no symptoms or history of lung cancer. For more information, you or your patients can contact 201-608-2266.

Treatment of Early Stage Lung Cancer

Early stage lung cancers can be treated by minimally invasive surgery or VATS (video assisted thoracic surgery). Over the past five years, all stage I lung cancer treated at Englewood Health have been resected by VATS. The benefits to patients is remarkable. Length of stay is decreased, there is reduced need for pain medications, patients recover faster and return to work within weeks of surgery, and survival rates are enhanced compared to open surgery.

Some patients with very early stage lung cancer detected by low dose screening CT scans may be candidate for sublobar resections. A sublobar resection is possible for tumors that are small and minimally invasive. Sublobar resections preserve more lung tissue than standard resections, allowing for faster recovery and reduced impact on exercise ability and lung functions.

Some patients with early stage lung cancer are not candidates for surgery because of severe COPD or other comorbidities. At Englewood, we have an active radiation therapy program that offers lung SBRT. This is an excellent alternative in early lung cancer not amenable to surgery. We utilize many methods of accounting and compensating for tumor motion as the patient breathes. Use of 4-D CT scans, respiratory cycle detection, and implanted markers (including markers that can detect submillimeter motion in real time) aid in assuring precision. Motion of tumor is managed by various methods such as abdominal compression (to limit motion of the diaphragm), gating (turning the beam on only when the tumor is in the proper location), and breath-hold techniques. During the planning process, each technique is evaluated and customized to provide the ideal treatment for the individual patient. Side effects are usually very mild and temporary. Results have been excellent even for people with severe lung disease.

Treating Advanced Lung Cancer

Unfortunately, many patients with lung cancer present with more advanced disease. At Englewood, we have assembled a multidisciplinary team dedicated to treating patients with advanced lung cancer (stages III and IV) with state-of-the-art therapies including tri-modality therapy (chemotherapy, radiation, and anti PDL1 immunotherapies) and customized targeted therapy directed at tumor-specific gene mutations. The upfront use of molecular analysis of tumors including next generation sequencing, tissue-derived EGFR and about 10 additional oncogene-directed abnormalities allow a personalized and oral biotherapy for some of our patients. When tissue is scarce or unavailable, a highly selective liquid biopsy platform is available. Each case and therapy is individualized for the best quality of life and survival.

Our Team Approach

We understand how stressful the initial diagnosis of lung cancer is to patients. That is why we are striving to expedite the staging and consultation process, so that treatments can be started soon after diagnosis. Through the multidisciplinary thoracic program at The Lefcourt Family Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center, newly diagnosed patients can be seen by thoracic surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, and pulmonary medicine on the same day.

If any of your patients are found to have a suspicious lung lesion on chest X-ray or CT scan, please feel free to call our nurse navigators at 201-608-2266. They will expedite the diagnosis and staging through our team. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to reach out to us directly at 201-608-2266.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven Brower, MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Steven Brower, MD, FACS
Medical Director
The Lefcourt Family Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center
Chief of Surgical Oncology and HPB Surgery
Professor of Surgery