

REVOLUTIONIZING BREAST CANCER CARE

— Meet some of the team making it happen. —



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Dr. Petrina Causer, Radiologist and Dr. Nancy Down, Surgeon

A LIFE-CHANGING DIAGNOSIS

At North York General Hospital (NYGH), every single breast cancer patient's case is reviewed by a multidisciplinary group of radiologists, surgeons, oncologists, pathologists, geneticists and nurses.

Every single one.

"This is not only unique in GTA hospitals – it's rare across Canada," explains Dr. Nancy Down, Medical Director of the Breast Integrated Care Collaborative and Division Head of General Surgery. "An entire cohort of specialists contribute their expertise to each case."

Sometimes even the most straightforward-looking cases may have variables that only come to light when different specialties bring their experiences to the table.

A COLLABORATIVE TEAM APPROACH

Collaboration is key to developing personalized care plans, so Dr. Down and Dr. Petrina Causer, Clinical Director of Mammography and Division Head of Breast Imaging, often team up to determine the stage of cancer before bringing each case to the team review.

They rely on advanced imaging equipment for the clearest understanding of each patient's case. Our *BMO Financial Group Breast Diagnostic Centre* has a long history of pioneering new breast imaging technologies – including a brand new, fully donor funded breast biopsy machine. NYGH is the first hospital in Ontario (and second in Canada) to acquire this technology.

"The new table is helping us see miniscule changes more clearly," Dr. Causer explains. "This means we can detect cancer earlier and get patients into treatment even sooner."

Newly diagnosed breast cancer patients are often overwhelmed and frightened. That's where Kate Chown, Nurse Navigator comes in. "I'm the go-to person for patients and their families," she says. "I help educate, assess and support them throughout their journey within our *Karen, Heather and Lynn Steinberg Breast Services*." Guiding patients through appointments, providing resources and even helping find child care for patients with young children, Kate helps patients move through their breast cancer journey.

Dr. Down, Dr. Causer, and Kate may be a patient's introduction to breast cancer care at NYGH, but it is far from the last point of contact they have with them. "Patients often segment their care into 'medical' or 'surgical'," says Dr. Down. "But they soon realize that it is a team approach, and we follow them through their journey – through diagnosis, treatment, and into survivorship. Our level of support and intimacy, combined with the most advanced imaging and techniques, are things you can't get anywhere else."



Kate Chown, Nurse Navigator

REVOLUTIONIZING BREAST CANCER SURGERY

A bright light during the uncertainty of a cancer diagnosis.

That's how Dr. Mary-Helen Mahoney, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon and Dr. Fahima Osman, Surgical Oncologist, view their work. "When patients receive a devastating breast cancer diagnosis, we can improve their care experience by offering immediate reconstructive surgery whenever possible," Dr. Mahoney explains.

Drs Mahoney and Osman are part of a dedicated team of cancer and plastic surgeons who brought innovative breast cancer surgery techniques to NYGH. Oncoplastic surgery – a hybrid of cancer and plastic surgeries, where surgeons work together to remove cancer and reconstruct breast tissue – is a specialized technique only utilized by a few hospitals throughout Canada. By performing both surgeries in one procedure, it is less invasive for patients and sets them on the road to recovery (physically and emotionally) much quicker.

"This doesn't happen at other hospitals," says Dr. Osman. "But NYGH makes it a priority. It's part of our culture here to work together and do the best for our patients."



Dr. Mary-Helen Mahoney and Dr. Fahima Osman, Surgeons



Rabih Yehya, Chemotherapy Coordinator
and Dr. Daryl Roitman, Oncologist

TARGETED TREATMENT

Rabih Yehya, Clinical Coordinator of the *Anne Tanenbaum Chemotherapy Clinic* keeps the lines of communication open at all times. "Breast cancer treatments are complex," he says. "It's important for patients and their families to have the ability to communicate with our team after they leave the clinic."

NYGH's team of medical oncologists, nurses and pharmacists use the latest evidence-based cancer-fighting chemotherapy, hormonal therapy and clinical trials to create targeted treatment plans for each breast cancer patient. Dieticians, social workers and mental health professionals add important support, truly caring for each patient as a whole.

For patients with metastatic breast cancer, NYGH's Pain & Symptom Management Clinic uses medical treatments to stop or slow the cancer's growth, and relieve associated pain or other symptoms. "By managing a patient's symptoms, we're helping her achieve the best quality of life," explains Dr. Daryl Roitman, Oncologist & Physician Lead, *Freeman Centre for the Advancement of Palliative Care*.

YOUR MOTHER.
YOUR BEST FRIEND.
YOUR DAUGHTER.
YOUR SISTER.
YOUR WIFE.
AND MAYBE EVEN YOU.

The only breast cancer program in Canada with international accreditation by the American College of Surgeons.

The lowest cancer surgery wait times in Ontario, from referral to consult, for the last three years.

The first hospital to bring breast radioactive seed localization and oncoplastic surgery to Toronto.

The foresight to develop a mobile app that connects breast cancer survivors with their care providers.

**We all know someone who has had breast cancer.
You can help ensure that North York General
continues to have the best equipment and facilities –
right here in our own backyard.**

