



Speaker Biographies

Patsy Astarita, LCSW-C, OSW-C

Patsy Astarita is the Manager of Supportive Care & Community Services at the University of Maryland, Upper Chesapeake Medical Cancer (UM UCMC), LifeNet Program. With over 28 years of experience as a clinical social worker and eight years of experience in program development and management, Astarita has been a driving force at UM UCMC in Bel Air, MD since August 2006. Having received her undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and her Master of Social Work (MSW) from the University of Maryland, School of Social Work, Astarita holds a current license from the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners as a Licensed Certified Social Worker (LCSW-C).

For the past 17 years, Astarita, also certified as an Oncology Social Worker (OSW-C), has worked almost exclusively with those affected by cancer. When she joined UM UCMC just over six years ago, she and a small team of nurses and social workers implemented a new supportive care services program under the Oncology service line at UM UCMC called Cancer LifeNet. The Cancer LifeNet Program offers free-of-charge services, including individual and family counseling, integrative therapies, and many support groups, to all residents of Harford and Cecil counties, regardless of where they receive their cancer treatment. The Program's team now includes oncology nurse navigators, oncology volunteer navigators, and clinical oncology social workers. A current member of the Association of Oncology Social Workers, Astarita has also serves as a member of both the UM UCMC Cancer Committee and the UM UCMC Breast Advisory Board.

Leslie Clark, RN, BSW, MSN

Leslie Clark is the Manager for the Oncology Nurse Navigators and is responsible for developing and managing multiple clinical program services at the University of Maryland, Upper Chesapeake Health's Kaufman Cancer Center. Leslie has been with Cancer LifeNet for 7 years and is one of the key players in the development of the Cancer LifeNet Program. Leslie has worked with cancer patients and their families for over 23 years. She started her career as a Social Worker, graduating with her Bachelors in Social Work from UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) and worked as a licensed oncology social worker for several years until deciding to further her education. Leslie received her associate's degree in Nursing from the Community College of Baltimore County in 2004 and in 2012 completed her Master's degree in Nursing from the University of Phoenix. Leslie is currently licensed as a Social Worker and a Nurse in the State of Maryland.

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Brandon Costantino

Brandon Costantino earned a degree in Spanish with a minor in Latin American Studies from Elon University in Elon, NC. He has been an employee of the American Cancer Society for over seven years. He began as a temp in the Patient Service Center in White Marsh, MD and moved into a full time position as a Cancer Information Specialist in the same service center. He spent 4 years as a Cancer Information Specialist before becoming the Patient Resource Navigator at University of Maryland, St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson, MD and is currently the Patient Resource Navigator at University of Maryland, Greenebaum Cancer Center in downtown Baltimore. In his role, he assists patients with receiving access to services that remove barriers to treatment.

Joan Daugherty, RN, MS

Joan has been a member of the management team of the Peninsula Regional Medical Center since 1986, and currently serves as the Executive Director of the Richard A. Henson Cancer Institute at Peninsula Regional Medical Center.

Joan served Peninsula Regional and its patients as Director of Women's and Children's Services, and played an instrumental role in the development of an in-house Pediatrician role, Neonatology and special care nursery, inpatient and outpatient Palliative program, the Peninsula Breast Diagnostic Center, the Peninsula Gynecologic Oncology Center, and the development of disease specific multidisciplinary programs. She currently serves on various Medical Center leadership committees and clinical process improvement teams during her tenure. As well, she has been involved in various cancer-related community activities with the American Cancer Society, Komen Foundation, Women Supporting Women, the Wellness Community Delmarva, Maryland Cancer Collaborative and the Maryland State Council on Cancer Control.

Joan enjoys working with the members of the Peninsula Regional team, physicians, and community members and agencies to improve the programs, care and services provided to community members.

Bunny Ebling, LCSW-C

Bunny is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and psychotherapist with over 35 years of experience. Bunny currently serves as the Chairperson of the Survivorship Committee of the Maryland Cancer Collaborative. Among her various positions through her years, Bunny established a group counseling practice, Wellspring Counseling, in the Baltimore area and has been a consultant to various organizations and churches regarding mental health issues. She has offered numerous seminars and workshops to women on the subject of the integration of identity and spirituality. She serves as Adjunct Professor and University Supervisor in the Human Services Department at Stevenson University, is a Field Supervisor for University of Maryland School of Social Work, mentors young women, and continues her psychotherapy practice part time.

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Bunny came to the field of oncology care after her very close friend and speaking partner was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. After accompanying her friend for clinical trials out of state and then sitting with her through her many treatments here in Maryland, Bunny became aware of the large gap in support services, not only in resources and but also regarding emotional support.

When ground was broken for the new Weinberg Cancer Institute at Franklin Square, Bunny wrote a proposal to establish a program of comprehensive psychosocial care for patients, families and caregivers along with a program devoted to supporting front line staff caring for very ill patients.

For the past 10 years Bunny has served as the Director of Psychosocial Oncology at Franklin Square in addition to more recently assuming responsibility as the Network Coordinator for Psychosocial Oncology at the 4 Northern MedStar hospitals: Union Memorial, Good Samaritan, Harbor and Franklin Square. She has actively been involved in advancing the field of Psychosocial Oncology with emphasis on bringing “whole patient care” to the medical world of oncology care.

Yousuf Gaffar, MD

Yousuf Gaffar is a very experienced oncologist at the Cancer Institute at University of Maryland, St. Joseph Medical Center. He was previously the clinical research director for Alliance Hematology Oncology with locations around the Baltimore area. Board certified in Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology and Hematology, Dr. Gaffar completed a Medical Oncology and Hematology Fellowship at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute at the University of South Florida, following internal medicine training at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He received his medical doctorate from Saba University School of Medicine.

Vinay Gupta, MD

Vinay Gupta is a fellowship trained surgical oncologist currently practicing in the MedStar Health network. He grew up in Baltimore and attended Mount Saint Joseph High School before attending Georgetown University. He then returned to the University of Maryland where he graduated in 1993. Vinay did his residency in Augusta, GA at the Medical College of Georgia and then finished his training at the University of Chicago. His focus is primarily Gastrointestinal Oncology (e.g. pancreas, stomach and colorectal) but he is actively treating breast cancer, thyroid cancer, melanoma and sarcoma as well.

He has been active with the Commission on Cancer (CoC) for the past 5-6 years as a liaison physician for 4 years and now as State of Maryland Chair for the past 2 years. Vinay runs the Tumor Board at Union Memorial Hospital and is active teaching surgical residents and students. His focus within the Commission on Cancer is to reach out to help CoC hospitals continue to strive for excellence and provide some ideas for each of your programs to meet the CoC standards.

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Jennifer R. Klemp, PhD, MPH, MA

Jennifer is an Assistant Professor, Cancer and Genetic Counselor and the Managing Director of the Breast Cancer Survivorship Center at the University of Kansas Cancer Center. She has worked in the field of breast cancer prevention and survivorship since 1996 and has a clinical research interest in understanding breast cancer risk, cancer genetics, quality of life, cognitive function, and psychosocial issues surrounding breast cancer, and lifestyle modification. She earned her Master's in Public Health at the University of Kansas Medical Center, a Master's in Clinical Psychology from the University of Kansas, and completed her doctorate in Clinical Psychology- Health Specialty, from the University of Kansas. Her dissertation work was entitled "Evaluating the effects of chemotherapy on cognitive function and quality of life in pre-menopausal women with breast cancer". She completed her Internship in Behavioral Sciences at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, IL. She has published and presented work with a focus on cancer genetics, alternatives to screening in high-risk women, compliance with a mobile mammography and educational intervention, and shared decision making regarding options to manage breast cancer risk. Current clinical research interests include breast cancer survivorship and developing a model for transitioning patients from the treatment setting to post-care follow-up.

Peter F. Lowet, MPPM

Peter Lowet has been the Executive Director of MobileMed since 2011. To position MobileMed for success under health reform, his focus has been on integrating behavioral health and other services, IT infrastructure, clinical productivity, and the patient experience.

He previously worked at the National Council on Aging (NCOA), where he was Vice President of Strategy and Organizational Transformation. Mr. Lowet has extensive experience in business development, strategic and operational consulting, and quality improvement. Prior to NCOA, Mr. Lowet served as the Director of Business Development at the New York University, Langone Medical Center, where he managed the assessment, planning and implementation of new strategic initiatives. He also worked as the Corporate Director of Business and System Development at MedStar Health in Columbia, MD and as Associate Hospital Administrator of Clinical Resource Management at Georgetown University Hospital. Mr. Lowet has a Master's degree in Public and Private Management from the Yale School of Management.

Selinza Mitchell, CNS

Selinza Mitchell comes from the Dallas Ft. Worth area of Texas, where she has had a 35 year relationship with health. Ms. Mitchell has practiced in the areas of Clinical Oncology and Medical surgical nursing for 24 years, currently she is on faculty at a school of nursing in North Texas where she has been teaching soon to be nurses for eleven years. Selinza is entering her ninth year as a most sought after National Speaker, presenting more than 150 lectures a year. Ms. Mitchell has given herself the title of 'The Advocates Advocate.' She says, "I want to be the one who takes care of those who take care of the world."