

Breastlink Matters

Quarterly Newsletter

SUMMER 2007



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Immune Therapy: Can you Find it at the Supermarket?



Many of our patients come to us with the desire to boost their immune system. We all remember getting shots for mumps, measles and polio. The AIDS epidemic of the 80's barraged us with fears about being "immune deficient". So, why not pick up an "immune

booster" from the shelves of CVS or Ralphs where foods and supplements are "advertised" to help us with colds, arthritis and.....cancer! Sadly, when one asks for data regarding the benefits of an immune enhancing supplement, the data simply is not there. We aren't saying that broccoli and pomegranates are not good for your immune system, we simply don't know. For physicians to support a treatment and not exploit the vulnerabilities of patients and their families with unproven methods, we have to base our recommendations on data...on "evidence based" medicine. This commitment led Breastlink to develop a collaboration with Dr. Nora Disis and Dr. Lupe Salazar, internationally respected research scientists in the area of breast cancer tumor immunology, at the University of Washington. Our hope is to find a vaccine that successfully cures and prevents breast cancer.

Drs. Disis and Salazar have developed anti-tumor vaccines and have treated more than 200 patients over the past 10 years. With our shared interest in bringing these vaccines from the lab to the clinic, we have sent more than 20 women to Seattle over the past 3 years to receive these vaccines. This evolving, unique collaboration has brought Drs Disis and Salazar to our offices for special "Immunology Clinics", where we see our patients with either of them and determine together whether a given patient is eligible for a vaccine. These vaccines, made up of either proteins or DNA and are targeted against the Her2neu protein. The Her2neu protein is present in 20% of women with breast cancer and "turns on" the cell to make it grow faster. Currently we are treating women with advanced disease who are cancer free after chemotherapy and herceptin, but remain at high risk for recurrence. It is our belief that the vaccine will turn on the good immune cells (T-cells) to kill the remaining cancer cells that may have been resistant to the chemotherapy. Preliminary results from Dr. Disis' earlier studies suggests that nearly twice as many patients are cancer free who received these vaccines.

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A Salute to Kristi A. Maya



There are some people who enter our lives fundamentally as observers, others

who enter to be observed and to inspire, and yet others whose presence as actor, receiver, catalyst and mentor, to transform the lives of others that you simply stand in awe that you had the privilege to be touched by them. Our CEO, Kristi A. Maya, is such a person. Modest by nature, Kristi has been the prime navigator of Breastlink's growth over the past three and a half years. Un-

der Kristi's leadership we have become a practice that can analyze itself—it's own performance and ability to meet patient needs. Systems were put in place to control and assure quality of our performance and our ability to achieve optimal care, as well as insure dialogue around care for the caregivers. Kristi has been that unusual CEO who knows every employee intimately—not just their job description, but how their family is, who has been sick and who has needed assistance. As employees' we have each been able to stop her in the hall, and ask her a detailed question related to a patient care issue, and receive—on the spot—a detailed and well informed answer. Kristi has truly sought to mentor—understanding that if you "give a man a fish, you

feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for life". Kristi has strived to create the circumstances for each of us to "learn to fish" for ourselves, to define areas in which we wish to grow as provider and to encourage us to pursue that growth actively. In July having safely piloted our practice through some very challenging times, Kristi announced that she has taken an opportunity to participate in the development of a community oncology center in Central California. It's impossible to fully characterize her contribution to Breastlink. We can only wish her the very best in her future life and release her with our deepest gratitude.

By Lisa Donley

breastlink
OPTIMAL BREAST CANCER CARE

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Breastlink Medical Group, Inc.

Events

- Sept. 7 & 8** California Breast Cancer Research Program Symposium. Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles
- Sept. 8 & 9** ASCO Conference San Francisco
- Oct. 6** Team Spirit Breast and Ovarian Cancer Walk
- Oct. 11** Dr. Link book signing at Barnes & Noble bookstore Torrance
- Oct. 20** Spirit of Survivorship Conference, Long Beach Memorial Medical Center
- Oct. 23** Governor & First Lady's Conference on Women
- Dec. 13-16** San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, San Antonio, TX

Challenges of Delivering Optimal Care

By John S. Link, MD

BREASTLINK is dedicated to providing our patients with the most current, effective care possible. We have chosen to practice in a non-HMO setting where patients choose us because of the work we do and the way that we do it. We are associated with high quality medical centers and participate in clinical research studies allowing us access to "cutting edge" technology. Recently we have encountered several major forces that could impede our ability to deliver optimal care. The first is the insurance industry.

My concept of health insurance is that you pay over time into a fund that a company or the government administers and pays out for your health care needs. A majority of the money you have paid should go to providing this care. Should these "health care money managers" make large profits and pay bonuses to executives? I think not.

The first force at work in the present medical environment is the relationship between insurance company and it's insured. Insurance companies have a responsibility both contractually and we believe ethically to work to provide the care that is in their insured's best interests in a financially responsible fashion. Instead many major insurance "companies" have cut reimbursement to such levels that community oncology practices such as ours are having difficulty covering medications and services they administer. On the consumer side, the vast majority of our patients report that their premiums are going up.

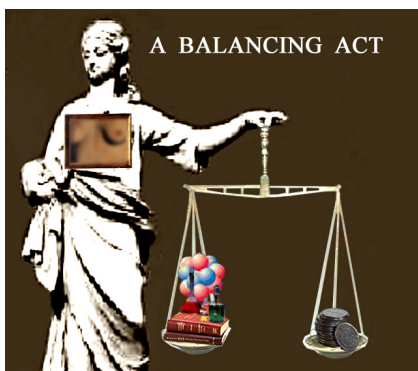
In addition companies are now delaying and denying payment for services and medications delivered based on requests for records and for more information even when prior authorization has been received. We are spending valuable resources dealing with reimbursement issues that divert us from our primary mission.

The second force is the pharmaceutical industry. Americans pay almost twice as much for medications as anyone else in the world. This is due to extended drug patents and huge advertising dollars either directed to you, or through targeted marketing to physicians. Our interest is taking care of you and your breast cancer. To do this we will continue to work with insurance companies and their directors, demonstrating we are practicing excellent medicine.

We will continue to do research so we have access to new technology. This will depend on philanthropic donations to the Barbara K. Robinson Research Breast Cancer Program and our Breast Cancer Care & Research Fund (BCCRF). We also need your help in working with the insurance industry. We may ask you to write letters, call insurance representatives regarding denials of service and authorization, write to your elected representatives and to the state insurance commission.

Most of us have paid in good faith for years into Medicare and insurance premiums and deserve to have that money returned to us in the form of good, not only good but superb health care. We will do everything we can at Breastlink towards achieving this goal.

Spirit of Survivorship Conference



Design by Terry Braunstein

Save the Date!

Saturday, October 20, 2007
8:00am-2:30pm

The Van Dyke Theater and Houssels Forum
Long Beach Memorial Medical Center

Speakers

John S. Link, MD, Breastlink Medical Group, Inc.
Dennis Slamon, MD, PhD, UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center
Patrick Terry, Genomic Health
Jackson Hunsinger, Author, *Turning Heads*

To Register

Contact Shara Castro, Long Beach Memorial Medical Center (562)933-0100

Breast Cancer Care & Research Fund

The Breast Cancer Care & Research Fund has been very busy. The following information will inform you of our progress.

Summertime Tea for Young Women with Breast Cancer



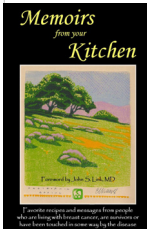
July 24th was an evening of discussion over tea, sandwiches and desserts. The focus group was facilitated by Lisa Donley, MFT. The information provided by the women will assist in the development of programs designed for young women facing breast cancer, as well as survivors. Funding for these programs will be provided by the Lori Shrotman Fund.

A Public Dialogue around Cancer Care, Who is Paying the Price?

July 25th was an informational public forum to discuss the state of delivering optimal cancer care while new drugs and technology are being developed and reimbursements from insurance companies are in decline. Speakers included Dr. John Link; Dr. James Waisman; Joanna Morales, Cancer Legal Resource Center and Heather Himelwright, Cancer Patient Insurance Advocates.



Charlotte's Web at the Long Beach Playhouse, a benefit performance to support Breast Cancer Care & Research Fund, was a fun evening for children and adults alike.



Memoirs from your Kitchen We want to publish your favorite recipe! BCCRF is collecting favorite recipes from people who have breast cancer, are survivors or have been touched in some way by the disease. The recipes will be published in a beautiful hard cover cookbook and will make great gifts. Our cookbook will give you the opportunity to share experiences, support, and the comfort given to you or by you. Readers will enjoy your story and photo as well as your fabulous recipe. Your submission should be directed to paul@bccrf.org

Inspiration by Martina Rosso



Ryan, Martina
Sebastian, Nikolos
& Bayou

I believe that my quality of life is better today than it was five years ago. I was a 36 year old woman with a 2 year old little boy named Sebastian and 5 months pregnant. My mother and grandmother had been diagnosed with breast cancer after menopause. I felt that eventually I also would be diagnosed with breast cancer but not until I was older...that was my thinking... hah! Then due to complications during the pregnancy, I lost the baby. Four weeks later I received the news that I had joined the club of women with breast cancer. I heard myself say that should not have happened so early. A year after my treatment, we were blessed with another son, Nikolas.

I was so looking forward to the 5 year mark of survivorship, however 6 months before that day I had my second diagnosis. I am now doing very well and have two little boys that look up to their Mommy. I devote time in my busy life to mentoring breast cancer patients and educating young women about breast cancer.

A lot of people ask me: How I can stay so strong? What is my other choice? Lay down and die? Not with a loving husband and two beautiful children. Everyday that I have with them is a blessing. God has chosen a path for me and I gladly take that path everyday. Faith is my hope and my strength. My family is my inspiration. I feel happy and healthy with my husband Ryan and sons Sebastian and Nikolas at my side!



San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium Dec. 13-16, 2007

If you are interested in attending and want to apply for a scholarship, please access our website. www.breastcancercare.org

Optimal Care Team Profile ◀ ◀ ◀

Trisha Felando is the business



office manager at Breastlink, managing many tasks such as payment entries, charge entries, accounts

receivable, diagnostic scheduling, credentialing, new patient intakes as well as insurance verification.

She obtained an MBA in Health-care Management from the University of Phoenix while working days and raising her daughter who is now thirteen years old.

Trish has been in the healthcare industry for over 21 years with managerial experience in medical

billing, collections and facility management. Her areas of specialization include oncology and surgery, process improvement and revenue enhancement.

Trish says, "I love my team!, I have been blessed with working with individuals who have been with Breastlink for a number of years and know their jobs so well that managing them is effortless. They are strongly committed to Breastlink and it is evident in their performance".

She works with physicians, nurses, staff and vendors and has a strong commitment to Breastlink and it's mission of providing optimal care to patients with breast cancer.

...Continued from page 1

Future treatment will involve taking patients' blood, after they received the vaccines and enhancing their T-cells in an environment outside the body. The goal is to increase the number of T-cells, make them more potent and then give these T-cells back to the patient. This is called "adoptive" T-cell therapy and will allow us to treat women with "active" cancer. The therapy appears to have low-toxicity, thus sparing women the side effects of chemotherapy.

We also plan to use proteins other than Her2neu in order to target ALL breast cancer. Once these vaccines are tested and proven to be effective in advanced disease, we hope to use them for women with earlier stage breast cancer. This will get us closer to the "holy grail"; the ability to prevent breast cancer as we now do with mumps, measles and polio. This work will be performed diligently and proven by rigorous science. We are pleased at Breastlink to offer this pioneering work to our patients.

We have had three major public meetings to update our patients and the community on the progress of our Immunotherapy Program. The future is very promising... stay tuned!!

By James R. Waisman, MD

... assessment, imaging, integrated research, and the whole woman in partnership with each individual woman and her unique needs.

What Does Healthy Eating Mean?

Health Facts



Healthy eating means eating a variety of foods that give you the nutrients you need to maintain your health, feel good, and have energy. These nutrients include protein, carbohydrates, fat, water, vitamins, and minerals. Nutrition is important for everyone. When combined with being physically active and maintaining a healthy weight, eating well is an excellent way to help your body stay strong and healthy.

If you have a history of breast cancer or are at high risk for the disease, eating well is especially important for you. What you eat can affect your immune system, your mood, and your energy level. Current research findings suggest that physical activity, a healthy diet, and a healthy weight can help reduce the risk of getting breast cancer for the first time or having a breast cancer come back.

Source: www.breastcancer.org

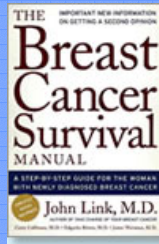
California Breast Cancer Research Program Symposium.

September 7, 2007

Young Women with Breast Cancer Workshop

John Link, MD.
James Waisman, MD.
Carey Cullinane, MD, MPH
Heather Himelwright

at the
Bonaventure Hotel,
Los Angeles, CA 90071
www.cbcrp.org



SAVE THE DATE!
Next Book Signing...
October 11, 2007
Barnes & Noble
21400 Hawthorne Boulevard,
Torrance, CA



Watch for the re-opening of
the Manhattan Beach
Breast Imaging Center
with
Digital Imaging

E-mail us at info@breastlink.com if you would like to have a friend receive future Breastlink newsletters

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