



Suada Neimarlija remembers her first day at Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) as a patient of the multidisciplinary Gastrointestinal (GI) Program:

“The first person to meet me and my family was Brad. He took us everywhere I had to go. I didn’t have to worry about anything. I think he even read my mind a little, knowing just what I needed through the long day.”

She’s referring to Brad Bott, clinical care specialist (CCS) for the GI Program. Psychic abilities notwithstanding, CCSs at HCI offer this kind of care and attention to patients of all 12 multidisciplinary programs—gathering records, scheduling lab tests, coordinating appointments, and introducing new patients to their team of cancer specialists.

Suada, a native of Bosnia who fled the war there with her husband and two children, is now a United States citizen and 11-year resident of Utah. When she was diagnosed with colon cancer in the summer of 2006, she knew she needed to come to HCI.

“It would be great if every hospital were like this,” she says. “People are so gentle, so helpful. You feel like you are the only one they are caring for.”

Clinical Care Specialists

excel

A cancer diagnosis often throws people into unfamiliar territory, full of unknown obstacles. In what can be an overwhelming situation, an experienced guide helps.

That’s the job of a clinical care specialist (CCS) at Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI). Each of HCI’s multidisciplinary programs focuses on a specific type of cancer—brain, breast, gastrointestinal, gynecological, head and neck, hematologic, lymphoma, sarcoma, skin, spine, thoracic, and urologic—and includes a CCS, who has training in the specific cancer, as part of its staff. The CCS organizes all aspects of each patient’s visit, starting from the first call to make an appointment.

Before the appointment, the CCS sends directions, maps, and other information to help the patient prepare for the visit. The CCS collects the patient’s medical records

and previous lab results so clinicians can review them beforehand. This essential member of the multidisciplinary team coordinates same-day appointments with all the doctors involved; sets up a visit with an HCI social worker; and verifies the patient’s insurance coverage, setting an appointment with HCI financial counselors if necessary. After preparing the patient’s chart and other paperwork, the CCS meets the patient face-to-face and guides the patient through the day.

“The CCSs are a patient’s first contact with HCI. They calm anxieties, assess needs, and generally take the patient through all the requirements of that first visit. I’ve heard patients refer to them as superheroes,” says Gary Webster, who was appointed manager of Multidisciplinary Support at HCI in 2006.

