Dear Friends,

While most cancers do not “run in the family,” approximately 5%-10% of cancers can be due to inherited factors. In families that may have an inherited pattern, there may be cancer diagnoses at younger ages, such as breast, colon, or uterine cancer before age 50; multiple relatives on the same side of the family with the same type of cancer; individuals with multiple primary cancer diagnoses, such as colon and uterine cancer in the same person; rare cancers, such as male breast cancer, medullary thyroid cancer; and/or having more than 20 colon polyps.

In 2009 the Katherine Ann King Rudolph Hereditary Cancer Genetics Program was created at The Hospital of Central Connecticut. As a board-certified genetic counselor, I am excited to be extending genetic counseling services for patients at the Cancer Center at MidState Medical Center.

Genetic counseling and testing is available for those with features of hereditary cancer in their family. Genetic testing is a blood test to look for inherited alterations, or mutations, in genes such as BRCA1 and BRCA2, which increase the risk of breast and ovarian cancers; or in colon cancer genes associated with Lynch and familial polyposis syndromes; and/or in other genes associated with less common causes of hereditary cancer.

Those who carry a cancer gene mutation are at a higher risk to develop certain cancers. If the test results show that there is a genetic mutation, a genetic counselor can discuss the implications and available medical options for the individual and their at-risk relatives.

A referral from a healthcare provider is required for genetic counseling and testing. In most scenarios, genetic testing is covered for individuals who meet criteria. The program follows guidelines from the National Society of Genetic Counselors, American Society of Clinical Oncology, and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. For more information, call (203) 694-8463. I look forward to being part of the MidState Medical Center team.

Sara Carroll, MS, CGC
The Cancer Center at MidState Medical Center presents:

Yoga for Survivors

An 8-week series of gentle yoga classes, led by Kathy Campbell, CYT (from West Hartford Yoga)
Class size is limited.

Mats will be available.

Dates: Every Monday
January 6 - February 24
7:00 pm - 8:15 pm

Registration Required:
203 694 8631

Location: MidState Medical Center
Horwitz Conference Center
Rooms 2 & 3

Your oncologist’s permission is required.

Learn more > midstatecancercenter.org
Emotional Freedom Technique, or “Tapping,” is a non-invasive meridian-based energy therapy that is similar to acupuncture, but without the needles. It combines ancient Chinese acupressure and modern psychology. It was originally developed by Gary Craig from the landmark discoveries of Dr. Roger Callahan in the 1980’s, based on the premise that negative emotions come from a disruption of the body’s energy system. We may feel this disruption in the form of stress, anxiety or feelings of being overwhelmed.

Energy circulates through your body along a specific network of channels called meridians. The Tapping practice consists of using your fingertips to tap on specific meridian points while talking through a wide range of emotions. This stimulates the body’s meridians and energy flow.

Tapping is an easy and powerful tool to learn. It can help with a wide variety of issues from fears or phobias, to anxiety, to reduction of trauma symptoms. For more information or to learn how to tap, two websites are listed below.

www.thetappingsolution.com
www.emofree.com

Resourceful – Resources to Battle Chemo Brain

This condition, also called cancer therapy-associated cognitive change, is frequently reported by cancer patients. No one knows why this occurs but some of the symptoms include forgetting things you usually have no trouble recalling, trouble concentrating, remembering or multi-tasking, and difficulty remembering common words or learning new skills.

To combat these issues, you can do things like use a daily planner and follow routines. Making a to-do list helps, as well as exercising your body, getting enough rest and eating your veggies. You can also exercise your brain. Below are some great website resources that offer productive and fun ways to put your brain through a workout.

- www.lumosity.com
- www.fitbrains.com
- www.positscience.com
- www.mindgames.com

And a couple of books:
Improving Cognitive Function After Cancer by Shelli Kesler
Beyond Chemobrain: Recovering After Surviving by Carol Devenir
Calendar of Events

Art Therapy
Weekly on Thursdays, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Bosom Buddies
First Wednesday of every month, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Healthy Steps
Weekly on Mondays, 5:15 to 6:15 p.m.

Hispanic Breast Cancer Support Group
Third Thursday of every month, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Leukemia, Lymphoma, Hodgkin's Disease, Multiple Myeloma Support Group
Second Wednesday of every month, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Look Good, Feel Better
Second Monday of every month, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Mark Your Calendars!
• HIGHLIGHTED SERIES: YOGA FOR CANCER SURVIVORS
Beginning January 6, 2014 – Horwitz Conference Center, Rooms II and III, 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This is an 8-week series of gentle yoga classes. Mats will be available. Your oncologist’s permission and your registration is required. To sign up, call (203) 694-8631.

• HIGHLIGHTED EVENT: Lymphedema Symposium
January 20, 2014 – Horwitz Conference Center, Rooms II and III, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. An evening of education and activities. Our Healthy Steps instructor, Barbara Moulthrop, CLMT, will also be on hand to lead the group in a brief introduction to this beneficial program. Dinner will be provided. Registration required. Call (203) 694-8631.

Eat To Be Well

After the holidays, it is important to try to get back on track. Try these small changes to help:

1. Watch your portions. Try to eat on a smaller plate or add more fruits and vegetables to your larger plate. Your full plate should be half fruits and/or vegetables.

2. Watch your alcohol intake. Try to remember that one serving of alcohol is 5 ounces. Be mindful of how big and full your glass is.

3. Beware of bad snacking. When you grab a snack, make sure you know what a serving size is. If you eat a sleeve of crackers you have just eaten 5-6 times the serving of crackers. Calories can add up this way.

4. Keep moving. As always, try to use the stairs whenever possible or park far from the store to get extra steps in.

5. Do not eat 1.5 hours before bedtime.
Fifty-year-old Kate Heidel-Heroux has deep roots in Meriden. She still lives in the house she grew up in, one that’s been in her family since the 1930s. So it was only natural that when she needed cancer treatment, she turned to MidState Medical Center.

In spring 2013, Kate, a veterinary nurse, was diagnosed with endometrial cancer, a cancer of the lining of the uterus. After performing a hysterectomy and removing lymph nodes, doctors determined that the best course of treatment for her would be chemotherapy, followed by radiation therapy.

Under the care of MidState oncologist Susan Alsamarai, MD, Kate had chemotherapy at MidState for one day every three weeks. “The people at MidState were amazingly nice—so sweet, kind and friendly, and willing to do anything for you while you were there,” she says. “It was an experience I wish I didn’t have to go through, but they were so good to me and were great with my family and friends.”

Kate has high praise for Dr. Alsamarai, too. “She always greeted me with a smile and treated me respectfully and like a human being. And she never made me feel rushed,” she says.

When it was time for radiation therapy, Kate was able to get the most advanced type of treatment available, close to home, under the care of Allan Kratzer, MD, a specialist in radiation oncology.

Dr. Kratzer treated Kate using high-dose-rate afterloading brachytherapy. The treatment involves positioning radioactive isotopes as close as possible to the site to be irradiated. The word “brachytherapy” comes from the Greek term for “a short distance.” In the case of a patient who is being treated for Kate’s type of cancer, doctors insert a hollow metal cylinder in the vagina and connect it to a transfer tube that, in turn, connects to a robotic unit containing radioactive isotopes. Clinicians activate the robotic unit from outside the treatment room. The unit then threads a thin wire through the tube and into the cylinder, delivering a carefully calibrated, pre-programmed, dose of radiation only to the desired location. There is almost no radiation to adjacent, normal tissues. And because the dose is so high, each treatment takes only six to seven minutes. Once a week for three weeks, Kate went to MidState’s Radiation Therapy Department for treatments.

Today, with treatment behind her, Kate is looking forward to feeling better and to doing all the things she enjoys—playing with her grandchildren, camping with her husband and getting back to the job she loves at a veterinary clinic. Still, she finds that her encounter with cancer has given her some valuable insights. “When you go through something like this,” she says, “you find out what’s important in life and what’s not.”
Do You Have A MidState Doctor? Call 1 800 DOCTORS

The Cancer Center at MidState Medical Center
The MidState Auxiliary Cancer Boutique

Every day is an important step in your fight against cancer. Our boutique offers a wide selection of cancer support and awareness products. You will find a variety of specialized products designed to support your journey through cancer treatment and recovery:

- Informational and inspirational books
- Hair alternatives including a selection of hats, wigs and head wraps
- Bras and camisoles for women who have had a mastectomy
- Breast prostheses by appointment with fittings by a certified fitter
- Non-metallic deodorants and skin care products for radiation patients
- Queasy Pops and Drops for chemotherapy patients
- Gift items and jewelry
- Gift certificates