



CANCER RESOURCE CENTER
OF THE FINGER LAKES

Cancer Support Services
Finger Lakes Region of
New York State



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@CancerResourceCenter

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For many more resources available to residents of specific counties in the Finger Lakes area,
please see

Cancer Support Services Guides for:

Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga, and Tompkins counties.

The Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes

...because no one should face cancer alone

No one is prepared to hear the words, “You have cancer.” It’s like entering a world where you don’t understand the language or even know which questions to ask.

Everyone feels lost at first.

This guide is designed to help you identify potential resources. It provides the answers to the questions we are asked about most often here at the Cancer Resource Center.

The Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes (CRC) is a local non-profit organization serving individuals in and around Tompkins County who have been affected by cancer. We are not affiliated with, nor do we receive funding from, the American Cancer Society.

We recognize that every person and every cancer is different, so we begin by listening. Many people come to us when they are first diagnosed. Others come because they are concerned about a loved one with cancer. We answer questions, suggest resources, and share what we’ve learned from others who have come through our doors.

Our programs include one-on-one assistance, support groups, financial advocacy, financial assistance, transportation assistance, a boutique, and wellness programs. We are happy to track down additional resources for you, just contact us with your questions.



Advice for People Newly Diagnosed with Cancer

by Bob Riter

The first few days following a cancer diagnosis are like riding on top of a speeding train. You're hanging on for dear life and can't quite see what's ahead. Although every situation is somewhat different, this is what I generally suggest:

- Focus on one step at a time. If you are having a biopsy next week, focus on that biopsy and do not let your mind wander to what might happen next.
- Take someone with you to medical appointments. They can take notes and help you remember what was said.
- Do not hesitate to ask your doctor to repeat something. Do not hesitate to get a second opinion if you think it might be helpful. Your doctor won't mind. (If your doctor does mind, you should get another doctor).
- Family members, friends, and complete strangers will give you advice. Be wary when they say, "You should do..." Though well-intentioned, they may not know what is best for you.
- You control who to tell about your cancer diagnosis and when to tell them.
- Remember that cancer treatments change rapidly. What you hear from people who were treated in the past is out of date.
- Understand that cancer is not a single disease. Lung cancer and breast cancer are very different diseases. There are even 14 different types of breast cancer. What you hear about cancer in other people probably does not apply to your cancer.
- Survival statistics are averages. They can be helpful if you want a general idea of the prognosis for people with your disease, but they can't predict what will happen to you as an individual.
- A new cancer diagnosis is rarely a medical emergency. You generally have several days or even weeks to explore your options. Some situations do require immediate attention, ask your doctor how long it is safe to wait before beginning treatment.
- Do not begin a radical "cancer curing" diet or major lifestyle changes before or during treatment. Just eat sensibly and nutritiously, exercise moderately, and get plenty of rest. You can make whatever lifestyle and diet changes you want after treatment is over.
- Nearly everyone undergoing cancer treatment experiences fatigue. It is probably the most common and least publicized side effect. Conserve your energy for activities that are most important to you.
- Nothing goes in a straight line. You will feel better one day; then you will feel worse; then you will feel better. Do not be discouraged by the down days.

Being diagnosed with cancer is life-changing for many and life-disruptive for nearly everyone. It is difficult at first, but once the decisions are made and treatment begins, most people gradually regain their rhythms. Cancer isn't fun, but treatment often ends up being more manageable than people expect. It's a club that no one wants to join, but trust me, you're in good company.

Bob Riter joined the staff of the Cancer Resource Center as Associate Director in 2000 and was the Executive Director from September of 2010 - September of 2017. Bob contributed regular articles about cancer for the Ithaca Journal. Bob's columns are

available online at www.crcfl.net or in his book, *When Your Life is Touched by Cancer: Practical Advice and Insights for Patients, Professionals, and Those Who Care* (©Hunter House Publishers, 2014).

Resources for Financial Assistance

<p>Cancer Resource Center 612 West State Street Ithaca, NY 14850 607-277-0960 http://www.crcfl.net/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained volunteers are available to assist individuals navigate their financial concerns related to a cancer diagnosis. We can help identify resources, organize paperwork, assist completing applications for benefits, and advocate on a client’s behalf.
<p>Social Services-Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) 320 W State St, Ithaca, NY 14850 (607) 274-5680</p> <p>To apply: Online: myBenefits.ny.gov HEAP application or to your HEAP Local District Contact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes. If you are eligible, you may receive one regular HEAP benefit per program year and could also be eligible for emergency HEAP benefits if you are in danger of running out of fuel or having your utility service shut off.
<p>Social Services-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) 320 W State St, Ithaca, NY 14850 (607) 274-5680</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutrition Assistance/SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency. To get SNAP benefits, you must apply in the state in which you currently live and you must meet certain requirements, including resource and income limits
<p>21st Century CARE 888-850-1622 www.21stcenturycare.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides patients immediate financial assistance for incidental expenses related to active cancer treatments
<p>Embrace Your Sisters 585-624-9690 www.embraceyoursisters.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based in Canandaigua, NY, provides emergency financial support to people with breast cancer in the greater Finger Lakes area
<p>Hope for Young Adults with Cancer http://www.hope4yawc.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides financial support to young adults battling cancer as well as those who have been in remission for up to 5 years after their treatment. Links to other similar organizations

<p>Catholic Charities / Samaritan Center 324 West Buffalo Street Ithaca, NY 14850 607-272-5062 www.catholiccharitiesstt.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Samaritan Center provides urgent, short-term financial assistance to families and individuals in immediate crisis. • Emergency financial assistance is offered in Tompkins County only; funds are limited and determined on a case-by-case basis. • Referrals for other types of assistance are provided.
<p>Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Western and Central NY Chapter 4043 Maple Road Suite 105 Amherst, NY 14226 716-834-2578 LLS Information Specialists: 800-955-4572 http://www.lls.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National organization with local chapters, which offer various supports for people with blood cancers. • Financial assistance available towards the cost of insurance and prescription co-payments. • There is also some financial assistance for travel expenses for those with a significant need.
<p>My Benefits NY www.mybenefits.ny.gov/mybenefits/begin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check website to identify potential program eligibility

Assistance with Medication Costs

<p>Ithaca Free Clinic 521 West Seneca Street Ithaca, NY 14850 Clinic: 607-330-1254 http://ithacahealth.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ithaca Free Clinic is a medical center where patients can receive both conventional medical care offered by physicians and nurse practitioners and alternative care from holistic professionals. • The clinic serves the uninsured, free of charge. • The clinic offers appointments, and also has walk in hours, call for details.
<p>CancerCare Copay Assistance Foundation 800-813-4673 www.cancercare.org/copayfoundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps cover deductibles and co-pays for chemotherapy or targeted treatment for certain cancer diagnoses.

<p>HealthWell Foundation 800-675-8416 www.healthwellfoundation.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assistance for Rx copays, health insurance premiums, deductibles and coinsurance, pediatric treatment costs, and travel costs
<p>Merck Co-Pay Assistance Program 855-257-3932 www.merckaccessprogram-keytruda.com/hcp/the-merck-copay-assistance-program/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Covers cost of Keytruda infusions up to \$25,000/year. Patient pays first \$25 of co-pay of each infusion.
<p>NeedyMeds P.O. Box 219 Gloucester, MA 01931 Helpline: 800-503-6897 http://www.needymeds.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anyone is eligible, regardless of age or income
<p>Novartis Patient Assistance Now www.patientassistancenow.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drug cost assistance
<p>Partnership for Prescription Assistance 888-477-2669 https://www.pparx.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acts as a single point of access for individuals without or with limited prescription drug coverage to receive information about financial assistance programs to get prescription drugs for free or at very low cost. ● Search engine resources available through various biopharmaceutical industry programs.
<p>Patient Access Network Foundation (PAN) 866-316-7263 panfoundation.org/index.php/en/patients/assistance-programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assistance for prescription drug costs

<p>Patient Advocate Foundation Co-Pay Relief Program 866-512-3861 https://www.copays.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides financial assistance to financially and medically qualified patients for co-payments, deductibles, or prescription medications. ● Program does have eligibility requirements. ● Application available online, or by calling.
<p>ProAct Prescription Discount Card proactrxsavings.com Cards are available online, at participating local pharmacies, or by calling 2-1-1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offers a free discount card that reduces the cost of prescription drugs. Present your card at participating pharmacies and save. ● Anyone is eligible, regardless of age or income who is without or has limited prescription drug coverage.
<p>RxAssist Patient Assistance Program www.rxassist.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information about free and low cost medication programs and ways to manage your medication costs.
<p>ScriptSave Well Rx wellrx.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cards are available online and at participating local pharmacies. ● Offers a free discount card that reduces the cost of prescription drugs. ● Present your card at participating pharmacies listed online. ● Anyone is eligible, regardless of age or income.
<p>The Assistance Fund (TAF) 855-845-3663 tafcares.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial assistance for copays, coinsurance, deductibles, etc.

Assistance with Insurance and Legal Issues

<p>American Cancer Society Helpline: 800-227-2345 www.cancer.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can help find specific resources in your region for day-to-day living such as rent, utilities, and transportation. • They also have a health insurance information team that helps people understand their choices to change or purchase new insurance.
<p>Cancer Legal Advocacy and Serv Project Legal Services of Central NY Multiple Locations 877-777-6152 https://www.lscny.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project of Legal Services of Central New York which provides legal assistance to individuals and their families living with cancer in Central New York. They can provide information and referral.
<p>Health Care Bureau NYS Office of Attorney General Helpline: 800-428-9071 https://ag.ny.gov/bureau/health-care-bureau</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bureau protects – and advocates – for the rights of consumers regarding health care throughout the state. They safeguard consumers against illegal practices in the health care market and assist consumers with resolution of health care complaints.
<p>Health Insurance Navigators Human Service Coalition State Street #133 Suite 275 Ithaca, NY 14850 607-273-8686 or 211 www.hsctc.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A free and confidential program to assist individuals find quality health insurance in NY, renew insurance, compare insurance plans and programs, or change insurance. • Call to schedule an appointment with a navigator.
<p>Law NY Legal Assistance of Western NY 902 Tabor St. Suite 1 Ithaca, NY 14850 607-273-3667 OR 800-724-4170 www.lawny.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free legal help with public benefits such as shelter denials, cash assistance, Medicaid, Social Security and SSI, low-income based housing, employment rights, consumer defense issues, survivors of domestic violence, divorces and wills, and elder care directives.

<p>Patient Advocate Foundation Co-pay Relief Program 866-512-3861 www.copays.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides patients with arbitration, mediation, and negotiation to settle issues with access to care, medical debt, and job retention related to their illness. ● Case managers work with patients, caregivers or their medical personnel free of charge.
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Wigs, Makeup and Mastectomy Products

<p>The Boutique Cancer Resource Center 612 West State Street Ithaca, NY 14850 607-277-0960 http://www.crcfl.net</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintains an inventory of wigs, hats, scarves, turbans, and mastectomy products. ● Staff provide personal assistance with wig fittings and selection. ● Items are free of charge to individuals with cancer.
<p>Paula Young 800-364-9060 https://www.paulayoung.com/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A company that has a selection of hairpieces and wig styles for women who want to look their best and feel confident. They offer a variety of products that can be ordered online, by phone, or by mail.

Beds, Wheelchairs and Other Equipment

<p>Finger Lakes Independence Ctr 215 Fifth Street Ithaca, NY 14850 607-272-2433 http://www.fliconline.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Center provides durable medical equipment (such as walkers, wheelchairs, rails, etc.) available for a short term loan. ● The Center also has a “Try It Room” with items that can help with daily living. The room also loans assistive technology and devices for a one month period.
<p>Ithaca ReUse Center 214 Elmira Rd Ithaca, NY 14850 (607) 257-9699 https://ithacareuse.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Works toward a resilient and waste-free world that values people and resources. Join us in reducing waste sent to landfills, and giving quality materials and people new chances, all while making a local impact.

Nutritional Assistance

The Cancer Resource Center occasionally receives donations of Jevity, Glucerna, and Ensure. Contact our office for current availability at 607-277-0960.

The Oley Foundation provides resources and information for people dependent on tube feeding or IV nutrition. Contact them at 518-262-5079.

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance is a clearinghouse for assistance with nutritional supplements. You may qualify for assistance from the manufacturer of the products. Contact the program at 888-477-2669. <https://www.pparx.org/>

Cancer Support for All Ages

Children:

In the local area, children with cancer are most often treated outside of Tompkins County. However, there are some local programs that can assist children and families.

Camp Good Days (www.campgooddays.org) provides residential camping programs and year-round recreational and activities for children with cancer, children with a parent or sibling with cancer, and children who have lost a parent or sibling to cancer.

Camp Kesem is dedicated to supporting children impacted by a parent's cancer. At no cost to families Kesem's innovative and fun-filled programs provide children with peers who understand their unique needs and create long-lasting impact. www.campkesem.org

Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes (www.crcfl.net) provides support to parents in talking with their child about cancer and connects them with additional resources in the community. Our program, **CRC Cares About Families**, helps families in need pay for counseling sessions for their children. Insurance co-pays can also be covered.

Young Adults:

Cancer can be especially difficult for young adults because they are just establishing themselves in their relationships and their careers.

Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes offers a support group for young adults.

Hope for Young Adults with Cancer (<http://www.hope4yawc.org/>) is an organization that provides financial support to young adults battling cancer as well as those who have been in remission for up to 5 years after their treatment. This organization has an application process for financial assistance for the necessities of everyday life.

Stupid Cancer (www.stupidcancer.org) is an organization whose mission is to empower, support, and improve health outcomes for the young adult cancer community. Their website provides age-appropriate resources and social networking for young adults with cancer.

The Young Survival Coalition (www.youngsurvival.org) is an international organization focusing on the critical issues women ages 40 and under who are diagnosed with breast cancer.

Older Adults:

Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes (www.crcfl.net) offers a variety of [support groups](#) for adults.

CancerCare https://www.cancer.org/support_groups Online Support Groups take place using a password-protected message board format (not live chat) and are led by professional oncology social workers who offer support and guidance.

Cancer.net

<https://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/finding-social-support-and-information/online-communities-support> Provides emotional support, there are several options to get the help you need. Joining an online community makes it easier to connect with others, even if they live far away.

National Cancer Institute

<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/coping/adjusting-to-cancer/support-groups> Offers online support groups meetings for people with cancer and anyone touched by the disease.

Transportation

<p>Angel Flight Northeast 492 Sutton Street North Andover, MA 01845 978-794-6868 or 800-549-9980 www.angelflightne.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A non-profit organization that provides air transportation in private aircraft by volunteer pilots so that children and adults may access life- saving medical care free of charge. ● The Northeast service area covers 9 states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
<p>Wings: Flights of Hope P.O. Box 872 Orchard Park, NY 14127 866-619-4647 or 716-667-0816 www.wingsflight.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A non-profit organization that helps people in need of free air transportation for medical and humanitarian purposes. ● Wings Flights of Hope flies out of Buffalo, NY to various locations throughout the North East section of the US.

<p>Angel Wheels (a part of Mercy Medical) https://www.mercymedical.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A non-profit charity, dedicated to providing non-emergency, long-distance ground transportation to financially disadvantaged, ambulatory patients who are traveling for treatment. ● Assistance can only be completed online.
<p>Road to Recovery Program Cancer Resource Center/ American Cancer Society (800-227-2345)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Cancer Resource Center is working in collaboration with the American Cancer Society: Road to Recovery Program to provide rides to take patients to treatments and cancer related medical appointments. Requests must be made well in advance. ● This program is especially helpful for people who need to travel into or out of Tompkins County. (Gadabout and FISH only travel within the county).
<p>Cornell Campus to Campus Bus C2C Service Hotline: 607-254-8747 www.c2cbus.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Campus to Campus bus makes three round trips daily to New York City and is very convenient for appointments at the major medical centers in the city. ● Cancer patients and a support person are eligible for free seats, if space is available. ● To check seat availability and make a reservation contact the Cancer Resource Center (607-277-0960).
<p>Medicaid Transportation Management 855-852-3287 https://www.medanswering.com/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrange long distance trips out of town when medically necessary. Long distance trips out of town may take more time to arrange and need to be scheduled at least one week (7 days) in advance. ● To book a ride please contact the number listed.
<p>Medical Answering Services https://goo.gl/NgZqk6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides information on transportation options to and from medical appointments within your community, all of which are covered by Medicaid.

An excellent source for additional information is 211 in your area.

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