Last June, Beckie Mogensen walked 20 miles in a charity event. A month later, this seemingly healthy woman was diagnosed with stage IV metastatic breast cancer.

“I have never felt as isolated as I did when I first learned I have breast cancer,” Mogensen said. To help her cope with the physical and emotional demands of cancer, her physician recommended she look at the many support services and resources available through The University of Kansas Cancer Center.

Within weeks, Mogensen was enrolled in the Cancer Wellness 101 class to learn more about her disease and what to expect during treatment. Over the past year, she has continued to take advantage of the center’s programs, including exercise classes, a fatigue management course, oncology rehabilitation and a weekly support group.

“Few cancer programs offer the support services and resources we do at The University of Kansas Cancer Center,” said Terry Tsue, MD, physician-in-chief of the cancer center. “Our comprehensive program allows us to treat the whole person not just the disease, ensuring patients have the most positive outcomes possible.”

Patients like Mogensen and their families receive ongoing assistance from an entire team of support services staff. This team identifies challenges patients face and provides tools to manage them, whether they are physical, nutritional, spiritual, social or psychological. Here are just some of the resources available to chronically ill patients and their families.

**Turning Point: A Center for Hope and Healing:** This program provides educational and innovative services for patients and their families, all at no charge. Classes cover such topics as emotional support, nutrition and exercise.

**Nurse navigators:** Beginning with diagnosis, the navigators guide patients, answer questions and offer support during this difficult time.

**Social services:** Oncology social workers help patients and their families cope with the normal emotional distress related to a cancer diagnosis and its treatment. They also assist patients in finding resources for lodging, transportation, home care services and financial concerns.

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*Sue Ellen Breese, ANP, provides extra support to help our patients manage their symptoms and the array of challenges caused by cancer.*
Psycho-oncology services: Our psychologists help cancer patients deal with the emotional aspects of living with and surviving cancer. This may include short- or long-term individual psychotherapy, family counseling, short-term crisis resolution and grief counseling.

Spiritual care: We offer pastoral care and spiritual services for our patients to help them find a balance between cancer treatment and spiritual needs.

Nutrition services: Dietitians specializing in the care of cancer patients work closely with patients to help correct nutritional deficiencies, minimize treatment side effects and create a nutrition plan.

Financial counseling: Our financial counselors help patients navigate the application process for government programs, securing any benefits for which they may qualify. And they explain what a patient can expect during treatment.

Brandmeyer Patient Resource Center: The resource center at the Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Care Pavilion provides answers, resources and support for cancer patients, their families and the community.

Missys' Boutique: The boutique is an accredited appearance center, offering products designed for cancer patients. The Patients in Need Fund provides assistance on products and services such as wigs and breast forms.

Support groups: Hospital staff facilitate support groups for patients and families on a variety of cancer types.

Oncology rehabilitation services: Our oncology rehabilitation staff works with cancer patients and caregivers to help patients maintain and improve their functional abilities, alleviate pain, minimize fatigue and improve quality of life.

Palliative care: This specialty team of physicians, nurses and social workers helps relieve suffering by providing symptom management and emotional support to patients and families.

Oncology fertility program: This program offers women with cancer options for fertility preservation.

Due to the treatment and support she has received at The University of Kansas Cancer Center, Mogensen is now strong enough to participate in another walk this month – at least for a few miles.

“Without the continuing support I receive from the cancer center staff and their many services, I don’t think I’d be here today,” she said.

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