



**ONCOLOGY
SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT
2023**

Dear friends and colleagues,

As we reflect on the past year, it is with great pride and gratitude that we share the accomplishments and milestones of our oncology program. This report highlights the strides we have made in enhancing patient experience, celebrating survivorship, advancing innovative therapies, fostering critical partnerships and achieving national recognition for our oncology research efforts.

Our commitment to patient-centered care remains at the heart of our mission. Over the past year, we implemented new initiatives aimed at improving the overall patient journey. We celebrated survivorship in unique ways that brought together patients, families and staff.

These actions reaffirm our commitment to life beyond cancer and the resilience of our patients.

AnMed continues to be at the forefront of advancements in oncology and non-malignant therapies. The adoption of cutting-edge robotic-assisted surgical technology has resulted in faster and more accurate diagnoses, which lead to improved patient outcomes. Our partnership with the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) continues to yield transformative outcomes. Our oncology program has expanded, utilizing telegenetic counseling and profiling to tailor treatments, enhancing effectiveness and minimizing side effects. This program also offers comprehensive risk assessments and personalized prevention strategies for patients and their families.

Research is the cornerstone of our mission to improve cancer care. This year our commitment to excellence has not gone unnoticed. Our oncology research program has been nationally recognized for accruals achieving top-tier status reflecting our robust patient engagement and trust. We also launched initiatives to ensure equitable access to clinical trials across diverse populations.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to advancing cancer care through innovation, collaboration and an unwavering focus on the needs of our patients and their families. Together, we will continue to make meaningful strides in the fight against cancer.

Thank you to our dedicated staff, partners and supporters who make these achievements possible. It is through your efforts that we continue to provide hope and healing to those we serve.



**Samantha Carter,
MSN, RN, OCN**

*Assistant Vice
President of
Oncology Services*

Our commitment to patient-centered care remains at the heart of our mission.

Innovative treatment delivers osteoarthritis care

Low-dose radiation treatments for osteoarthritis are delivered at AnMed Cancer Center to provide relief and effective care when other options fail. The treatment program is among services found at AnMed but nowhere else in Upstate South Carolina.

Six patients had treatments on 14 places on their bodies in 2023.

Melanie Jennings, department manager of Radiation Oncology at AnMed, became interested in providing the treatment program after reading about its success in other parts of the world. She presented the idea to AnMed radiation oncologists and earned their support.

“Every patient we have treated thus far has had a tremendous reduction in pain, almost down to a level one-two on the pain scale,” Jennings said. “We had a patient who came in in a wheelchair. We treated her knees. When she was done, she was walking, and she said that was the least pain she’s had in a very long time.”

The dose of radiation that’s used is extremely low, so the chances of it creating cancer is very low.

The therapy is typically complimentary to other therapies that osteoarthritis patients undergo, but in cases where patients can’t tolerate traditional medication, it can be their only option.

Telegenetic counseling services boost access to care

Opened in 2004 and accredited by the Commission on Cancer and the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers, AnMed Cancer Center has partnered with various providers of genetics counseling services over the years. The health system switched to a partnership with the Medical University of South Carolina in July 2023, and a record number of 339 patients participated in the program in 2023.

Improving access to care particularly for areas that are underserved, telegenetic counseling uses videoconferencing to connect patients with genetic counselors for cancer-related issues. It helps patients understand how genetic mutations affect their risks for certain cancers, enabling them to make informed decisions about their care.

When local doctors determine telegenetic counseling is right for patients, the patients participate in sessions where inherited risk factors are assessed, genetic testing options are discussed and education is delivered. Results can be shared with family members who may also have risk factors and benefit from testing.

“Our partnership with MUSC genetics allows us to provide timely and comprehensive genetic risk assessment and testing,” said Melissa Kimbrell, manager of cancer support services. “This empowers our patients with another tool to make health care decisions.”

Faster and more accurate diagnoses come with Ion tool

AnMed launched use of a new tool in the fight against lung cancer in 2023: the Ion endoluminal system, Intuitive’s robotic-assisted platform for minimally invasive biopsy in the lung.

Faster and more accurate diagnoses have come thanks to the exceptionally precise tool, including for Peggy Kapadia, a 57-year-old Williamston resident. Kapadia benefited from an early diagnosis. She went on to have a lobectomy performed by Dr. Bill Buice, and she emerged seemingly cancer-free.

Dr. Abhijit Raval and Dr. Chet Walters, who led integration of the innovative new system, said AnMed is enjoying a biopsy success rate of greater than 85% after previous bronchoscopic systems rated only 60-65%. A successful biopsy is determined by securing an accurate diagnosis.

“With our new robotic system, our confidence going after smaller and more difficult lesions along with our overall results have substantially improved,” said Dr. Walters. “With diagnosing smaller tumors, more patients are being offered curable surgical resection. We are excited to offer this to our community and see firsthand the effects of early detection and treatment in our own patients.”

“We screen a lot of people who have smoked, and we find small spots, but we hadn’t been able to do anything about that, so we continued to observe them, which created a lot of anxiety in patients’ minds,” Dr. Raval said. “With this new Ion system, we can go behind these spots, obtain a tissue sample and diagnose cancers in earlier stages – and hopefully provide a cure with a surgical resection – while we minimize the anxiety of continuous follow-up.”

Intuitive, the company that created the system, built it on the belief that collecting lung tissue



samples for biopsy could be safe and simple even when nodules are small and located in the peripheral lung. Intuitive’s internal testing has shown that Ion’s ultramaneuverable, fully articulating catheter allows clinicians to reach small lesions in all 18 segments of the lung while its unprecedented stability enables the precision needed for biopsy.

To learn more about the system, visit anmed.org/services/lung-respiratory-care

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Survivors collect keepsakes as they ring the bell

Brainstorming ways to celebrate cancer patients as they complete journeys of chemotherapy or radiation therapy, Infusion Center Nurse Manager Shannon Clayton was on a hunt.

She wanted something dignified, something signifying accomplishment, something that would suit the occasion as patients ring the bell to mark their final treatment and enjoy a bit of celebration. So she helped design a medallion bearing the honor of being a “Survivor.”

Radiation Oncology and Oncology Infusion Center staff members present the acrylic-star keepsakes to patients at their final treatments.

“Patients are very excited when they finish up their radiation treatments,” said Radiation Oncology Manager Melanie Jennings. “This is a big deal for them. A lot of patients bring family with them for



their final appointment, and they take pictures and celebrate the accomplishment.”

Now they have a memento that can serve as proof of their journey to survivorship.



Mobile Mammogram Coach Totals

MONTH	SITES	PATIENTS	BREAST CANCER IDENTIFIED
January	16	247	4
February	17	309	3
March	22	314	1
April	16	235	1
May	14	228	1
June	19	301	0
July	16	248	0
August	16	227	2
September	20	285	0
October	22	369	1
November	15	210	0
December	16	229	0
Total	209	3202	13

Oncology research team praised for advancing work in clinical trials

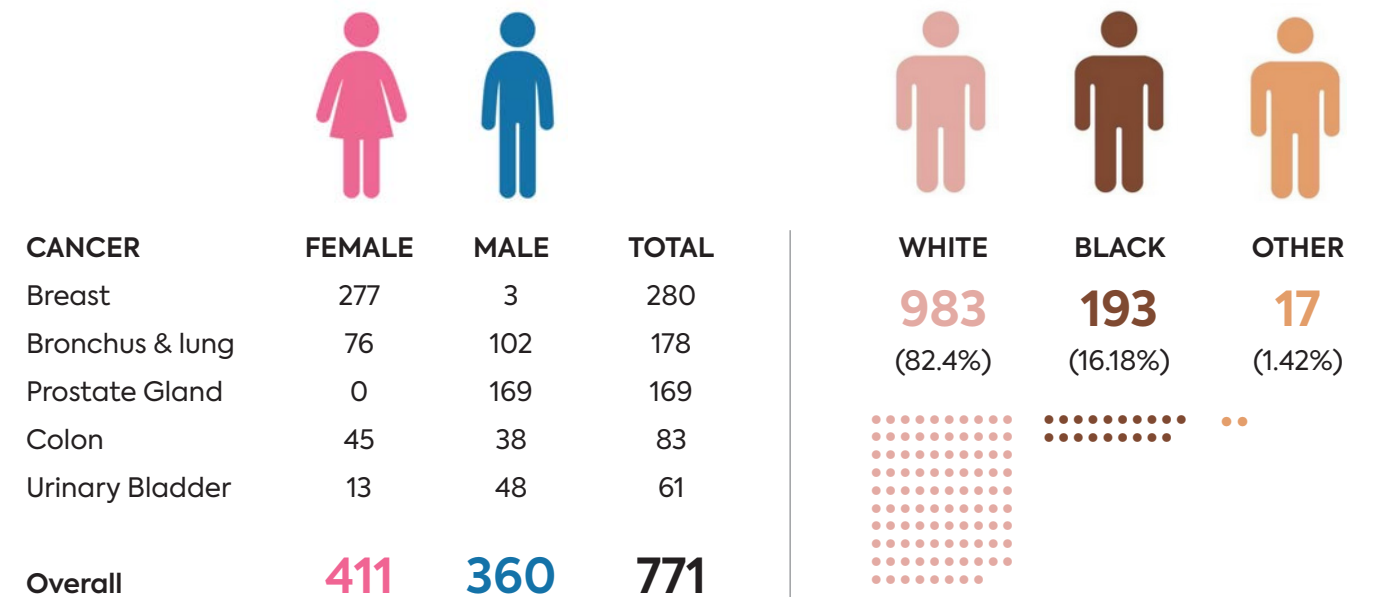
The AnMed oncology research team and Upstate Carolina NCORP – a community oncology research program supported by the National Cancer Institute – ranked among the top three sites in the nation for the University of Rochester Cancer Center research base in the URCC-21038 clinical trial “Disparities in Results of Immune Checkpoint Inhibitor Treatment (DiRECT): A Prospective Cohort Study of Cancer Survivors Treated with anti-PD-1/anti-PD-L1 Immunotherapy in a Community Oncology Setting.”

The team was celebrated at the national meeting in Niagara Falls for outstanding accrual efforts and engagement with the Black community, increasing diversity enrollment to clinical trials.

“I’m so very proud that year after year our team is recognized by NCI research bases nationwide for their excellence in accrual and quality data,” said Rhonda Ballew, oncology research manager. “Their passion for cancer care and clinical trials is evident in how they collaborate with our patient navigators, oncology providers and other departments across the oncology service line to enhance access and enrollment to clinical trials.”



2023 Case Distribution







AnMed Cancer Center
2000 E. Greenville Street
Anderson, SC 29621

Main: 864-512-4216
Fax: 864-512-4585

AnMed.org