October 20, 2017

Dear Colleague,

I want to introduce you to two outstanding physicians new to Valley-Mount Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Care, recruited to our exceptional multidisciplinary gastrointestinal cancer team.

Surgical oncologist Melanie Ongchin, M.D., joins Valley from NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, where she was Assistant Professor of Surgery and Assistant Attending Surgeon. Dr. Ongchin received her medical degree from UMDNJ and completed her residency at SUNY Buffalo. She did a year of research at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and her fellowship in Surgical Oncology at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Ongchin is skilled in minimally invasive GI surgery, most notably robotic pancreatic and colorectal surgery. Dr. Ongchin and Anusak Yiengpruksawan, M.D., Director, Minimally Invasive and Robotic Surgery, can be reached at 201-634-5547.

Kevin C. Wood, M.D., received his medical degree from the University of Kansas School of Medicine and completed his residency at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. He joins Valley after completing his Hematology and Medical Oncology fellowship at the University of Chicago. Dr. Wood has a special interest in both gastrointestinal and head and neck malignancies, and will be working closely with Dr. Ongchin and radiation oncologist Thomas Kole, M.D., Ph.D., to develop a robust GI cancer clinical trials program at Valley. Dr. Wood can be reached at 201-634-5578.

Finally, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I hope that you will enjoy reading the enclosed insert, which describes the outstanding spectrum of breast cancer diagnosis, treatment and support services offered by Valley-Mount Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Care.

If you have any questions about these or any of our services, please feel free to call or email. I will be glad to speak with you.

Sincerely,

Ephraim S. Casper, M.D.

Enclosure
From routine screening to advanced cancer care, Valley’s personalized approach reflects a fundamental commitment that puts the patient at the center of all care. “We want our patients to experience their unique importance to us in everything we do for them,” said Laura A. Klein, M.D., Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon and Medical Director of The Valley Hospital Breast Center.
Exceptional Screening and Diagnostic Services

Breast screening services are offered both at Valley’s main campus in Ridgewood and the Luckow Pavilion in Paramus. 3-D mammograms are used for all screenings. Valley’s advanced screening and diagnostic services and our expert staff mean more accurate readings. And cancer is detected at an earlier stage.

Some people experience Valley’s trademark emphasis on patient-centered care before they arrive at its doors. “Our scheduling allows for same-day appointments whenever possible, particularly for those patients who have a suspicious lump or other concern and need to be seen as quickly as possible,” said Jaclyn Calem-Grunat, M.D., Co-Director of Breast Imaging.

Referring physicians welcome the expedited accommodation for their patients. “When people know that they have a suspicious lump, they have a heightened sense of urgency,” said Dr. Calem-Grunat. “They and their physicians appreciate the ability to receive a fast appointment.”

“I feel strongly that paying special attention to the patient’s emotional well-being is crucial to the intimate bond formed between the patient and the team.”

– Karen Kwilecki, R.N.

Personalized Attention

If screening reveals a potential concern, specialized support begins immediately. Breast patient navigators guide patients on a one-on-one basis through diagnosis and, in the case of cancer, through treatment and follow-up. “I feel strongly that paying special attention to the patient’s emotional well-being is crucial to the intimate bond formed between the patient and the team,” says Nurse Navigator, Karen Kwilecki, R.N. “This approach to care helps the patient feel secure and calmer in his or her journey.”

World-Class Breast Surgery

Valley’s world-class surgical program offers top-notch modalities by pioneering surgeons. “Our mission is two-fold,” said Dr. Klein, who is also a Clinical Assistant Professor at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS). “We not only treat our patient’s cancer; we treat the patient as a person, with a sensitive and individualized approach to treatment.” Dr. Klein and her colleague Tihesha L. Wilson, M.D., Assistant Medical Director of the Breast Center, bring a particularly high level of expertise to the program. As specialized oncoplastic surgeons, the physicians combine the best practices of established plastic surgical techniques and breast cancer surgery.
The Hallmark of Teamwork

A spirit of collegiality is at the heart of breast cancer services at Valley. It’s an extraordinarily dynamic environment. “Things never stay the same,” said Thomas Rakowski, M.D., Chief of Hematology/Medical Oncology Services at Valley and a Clinical Assistant Professor at ISMMS. “We constantly push each other to develop the best treatment plans.”

Collaboration defines the program in countless ways. A weekly multidisciplinary breast cancer conference attended by representatives from at least 10 areas of specialization is central to Valley’s breast cancer services. Collaboration among physicians is part of the development of each treatment plan.

“I work closely with the breast surgeons, medical oncologists and radiation oncologists to help guide the personalized care each breast cancer patient deserves,” said Breast Pathologist Andrey Gritsman, M.D. Pathologists evaluate tissue removed at biopsy and provide the team with some of the most crucial information, allowing for unprecedented accuracy in treatment plans.

Comprehensive Breast Care

Recognitions
The Valley Hospital Breast Center offers comprehensive breast care services from prevention, screening, evaluation and treatment, to rehabilitation and support. The Center’s high-quality care has earned it a number of national recognitions, including:

- Accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers
- Recognition as Breast Imaging Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology
- The “Gold Seal” of approval for breast cancer care from The Joint Commission
- Named for the fourth consecutive year, by the Women’s Choice Award as one of America’s Best Breast Centers

Services
Valley is committed to offering evidence-based, data-driven care, including a comprehensive roster of clinical trials.

Valley’s dedication to providing high-quality care also includes an investment in state-of-the-art technologies, treatment modalities and specialized services including:

- Genetic Consultations
- Imaging:
  - 3-D mammography
  - Breast ultrasound
  - Breast MRI
  - Stereotactic, ultrasound and MRI-guided breast biopsy
- Radiation Oncology:
  - TrueBeam™ high-precision radiotherapy treatment
  - Accelerated, or hypofractionated, radiation therapy
  - Heart-protecting radiation treatment techniques, such as prone treatment and deep inspiratory breath hold
  - Intraoperative radiation therapy
- Surgery:
  - Breast-preserving lumpectomy
  - Breast seed localization, a more patient-friendly procedure to precisely pinpoint small breast tumors or abnormal breast tissue
  - Nipple-sparing mastectomy
  - Immediate reconstruction following mastectomy
  - Multidisciplinary oncoplastic and plastic surgery team for optimal cosmetic results
- Medical management
  - Personalized treatment planning
  - Targeted and antibody therapies
  - Pre-operative adjuvant therapy to reduce the size of a tumor prior to surgery
  - Prophylactic treatment for high-risk patients
  - Cardio-Oncology Program that includes special echocardiograms to monitor the negative effects on the heart prior to and during chemotherapy
Valley’s Radiation Oncology team is a cohesive group of professionals who have dedicated themselves to Valley’s patients for many years. “We combine state-of-the-art treatment modalities and technology with highly qualified, experienced professionals in an evidence-based approach,” said Chad DeYoung, M.D., Co-Director of Radiation Oncology at Valley and Clinical Assistant Professor at ISMMS.

“Patients and their families appreciate superb teamwork,” said Dr. Wilson, who also serves as Clinical Associate Professor at ISMMS. “It is comforting for them to see how eager we are to share information and seek another physician’s opinion,” explained Dr. Wilson, whose training has included a special focus on a holistic approach. “We are united in their care, and they know that matters.”

Specialized Services Across the Continuum of Care

The Breast Center offers holistic and specialized services across the continuum of care. Numerous activities and support groups help sustain survivors and their families. Difficult topics such as body image, sexuality and fertility are addressed with knowledge and understanding. Therapeutic massage, Reiki and yoga are offered.

Multi-disciplinary supportive and palliative care services offer inpatient, outpatient and home-based symptom management. “We provide comfort, support and practical assistance to patients and their families,” said Puneeta Sharma, M.D., Director of Palliative Care. “Breast cancer patients can feel like everything is topsy-turvy. We hold their hands, helping them cope with today and plan for the future.”

Risk assessments, genetic counseling and state-of-the-art panel testing for genetic syndromes are provided by specifically trained professionals who assist patients in making important health decisions.

Led by cardiologist Benita Burke, M.D., Medical Director of Heart Care for Women, Valley’s unique Cardio-Oncology Program screens all women for cardiac risk and includes regular monitoring of cardiac function and advanced modalities such as special echocardiograms designed to monitor the negative effects on the heart prior to and during certain types of chemotherapy.

The program benefits all our breast cancer patients, said Dr. Burke. “To help ensure fewer complications, we screen all breast cancer patients for heart disease risk factors.”

“It almost sounds too simple, but I think the most important thing that people need to know about us is that we offer a first-rate program that is producing outstanding results,” said Dr. Rakowski.

“I want to tell people, ‘Don’t miss these great opportunities for exceptional care.’”

For more information, about The Valley Hospital Breast Center visit www.ValleyHealthCancerCenter.com. For breast MRI appointments, call 201-447-8040. For mammogram and bone density appointments, call 201-447-8600.
Valley’s Breast Cancer Care Team: Devoted, innovative, personalized care.

Valley Health System’s team of breast cancer specialists is elevating cancer care in our region.

Dedicated to achieving the best possible results, these doctors collaborate on innovative treatments and technologies — including endoscopy and plastic surgery for the best possible outcomes — to ensure each woman not only receives the care and treatment she needs, but is also cared for as a whole person. And through Valley’s partnership with the Mount Sinai Health System for cancer care, these doctors offer women access to innovative research and clinical trials they are facing breast cancer diagnosis. This is the team to choose.

For more information about Valley Breast Cancer Care Team and the treatments they offer, please visit ValleyBreastHealth.com or call 209-594-4557.