



Staff photo by Dan Relland

Dr. Josiah Nelson, left, a urologist at Western Wisconsin Urology, and Dr. Peter Hanson, a radiologist with Medical X-Ray Consultants, performed Sacred Heart Hospital's first CT-assisted renal cyroablation last month on Pat Strassman of Eau Claire, right. The minimally invasive procedure "freezes" tumors.

A cold cure for cancer

Doctors provide less invasive approach to treating tumors

By Christena T. O'Brien
Leader-Telegram staff

Diagnosed with a tumor on her right kidney, Pat Strassman wasn't looking forward to the suggested treatment — partial removal of the organ.

Encouraged by her sister to get a second opinion, the 63-year-old Eau Claire resident saw Dr. Josiah Nelson, a urologist with Western Wisconsin Urology.

Going into the appointment, Strassman expected to hear the same thing, but she was "blown away" when Nelson offered her a minimally invasive option — CT-assisted renal cryoablation.

"I truly believe this was an answer to my prayers," said Strassman, who visits her 92-year-old mother daily and was concerned about the expected 10-day hospital stay that went along with the original treatment option she was given.

New procedure

She underwent CT-assisted renal cryoablation March 8 at

Sacred Heart Hospital, which required her to spend one night there. Nelson and Dr. Peter Hanson, a radiologist with Medical X-Ray Consultants, performed the procedure — the first of its kind at Sacred Heart Hospital.

During the procedure, three needles were inserted through Strassman's back. The physicians then used a computerized tomography, or CT, scan to make sure the probes were in the correct position before pushing them into the tumor. (The number of needles used depends on the size of the tumor, Nelson explained.)

High-pressure argon gas then was pushed through the 1.7-millimeter, hollow-point needles into the tumor, freezing the entire mass for 10 to 15 minutes, then allowing it to thaw for about 10 minutes before another 10- to 15-minute freezing cycle, Hanson and Nelson said.

"The studies have shown you get a better kill rate doing it that way," Nelson said, adding that the

procedure itself has a less than 2 percent complication rate and a better than 90 percent success rate.

The physicians will be monitoring Strassman every few months for the next several years to see if the tumor reoccurs or another one crops up elsewhere, Hanson said.

Comfortable benefits

Most kidney tumors — about 85 percent — are cancerous when they reach about 3 centimeters in size, said Nelson, noting a fair amount of these tumors are found incidentally. That said, the physicians didn't biopsy Strassman's tumor.

Renal cryoablation can prove beneficial to patients because it is minimally invasive, preserves as much kidney tissue as possible and results in shorter recovery time for patients, Hanson said.

But CT-assisted renal cryoablation, also performed at Luther Midelfort, isn't an option for all patients, said Nelson, who performed the procedure during his training in Madison.

The procedure is ideal for people, like Strassman, with tumors around 3 centimeters or less on the dorsal side — or back — of the kidney away from other or-

gans, so physicians can treat the mass only, he said. The patient's age and medical history also play a role; ablation therapy now is more ideal for older patients.

In Strassman's case, the tumor was located next to the system that drains the kidney, Nelson said. Renal cryoablation didn't injure that system, as other treatment options could have.

Easier recovery

More than a month after the procedure, Strassman feels good, but is still surprised that she had a tumor on her kidney.

"I really didn't have any symptoms," said Strassman, who was asked to bring in a urine sample after she suspected she was getting a urinary tract infection.

When she went to see her doctor, she was told there was blood in her urine, but there was no sign of infection. Strassman then went to see a urologist and underwent tests, which revealed a suspicious spot on her kidney. She was told she had a tumor on Dec. 23 and learned many tumors are cancerous.

"I had every confidence it was going to be OK," she said.

O'Brien can be reached at 715-830-5838, 800-236-7077 or christena.obrien@ecpc.com.

Get Moving

Family Hike at Hoffman Hills

Time: 10 a.m. to noon.
Date: Saturday.
Place: Hoffman Hills State Recreation Area, Menomonie.
Registration: 715-233-7464 or www.rcmc-mhs.org.
Cost: Free.
Other: The event, part of Red Cedar Medical Center's Wellness ROCKS initiative, includes hiking the trails, climbing the 60-foot high observation tower and enjoying a free lunch.

□ □ □

Nurses' Walk

Time: 5:30 p.m.
Date: Thursday, May 6.
Place: Pine Pavilion, Carson Park.
Registration: Call Sacred Heart Hospital's Patient Services at 715-717-1435. Walkers also can register the evening of the walk, beginning at 5 p.m.

Cost: None.

Other: Nurses from Luther Midelfort, Marshfield Clinic, Sacred Heart Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital and student nurses at Chippewa Valley Technical College and UW-Eau Claire will celebrate National Nurses' Week, which is May 6 to 12, by participating in the 18th annual event. The 1-mile walk is intended to highlight the nursing profession's commitment to illness prevention and wellness.

□ □ □

Off Da Run

Time: 8 a.m., half-marathon; and 8:15 a.m., 5K.
Date: Saturday, May 15.
Place: Citizens State Bank, 102 W. Bluff St., Woodville.

Registration: Register online at www.midwestevents.us. Race-day registration runs from 6 to 7:15 a.m.

Cost: 5K — \$20 before May 1, \$25 after. Half-marathon — \$25 before May 1, \$30 after.

Other: The eighth annual event is sponsored by the Baldwin-Woodville Sno-Hawks snowmobile club.

Information: Dennis at 715-698-2555 or dennis@bwsnohawks.com.

□ □ □

Fido & Friends Fun Run

Time: 10 a.m.
Date: Saturday, May 15.
Place: Oak Pavilion, Carson Park.

Registration: Registration forms and pledge sheets are available at www.eccha.org or Ark Animal Hospital, Eau Claire Animal Hospital, Kindness Animal Hospital, Northside Pet Hospital, Oakwood Hills Animal Hospital and Westgate Animal Hospital. Pledges also can be raised online at www.firstgiving.com/eccha. Race-day registration begins at 9 a.m.

Cost: \$20. (Pre-registrants should submit their entry form and fee by Tuesday, May 11, to ECCHA, 3900 Old Town Hall Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701. Checks should be made payable to the Eau Claire County Humane Association.)

Other: The 24th annual event is a fundraiser for the Eau Claire County Humane Association. Pets are allowed to participate, but must be leashed and current on vaccinations.

Information: 715-839-4747, ext. 25, or www.eccha.org.

□ □ □

New Balance Girls on the Run 5K

Time: 10 a.m.
Date: Saturday, May 15.
Place: Owen Park.

Registration: Go to www.indianheadtc.org to download a registration form or register online at www.active.com. Race-day registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Cost: Adults/teens — \$15 through May 3, \$25 after. Youths 12 and younger — \$10 through May 3, \$15 after.

Other: Proceeds from the event benefit Girls on the Run of Eau Claire County, an after-school wellness program for girls.

Information: Go to www.gotreaucire.org, send an e-mail to girls@therunec@charter.net or call 715-839-0941.

Health Matters

CLINIC OPENING: Marshfield Clinic Arcadia Center, 945 S. Dettloff Drive, will open for patient care on Monday, May 3.

The 5,000-square-foot primary care clinic will offer family medicine and outreach services.

Kathy Boe, a nurse practitioner, will begin seeing patients at Arcadia Center on May 3. She earned her undergraduate degree from Winona State University, Winona, Minn., and a master's degree from UW-Eau Claire. Boe previously had worked at Black River Memorial Hospital and Krohn Clinic, both in Black River Falls. More recently, Boe was employed by Community Health Partnership, based in Eau Claire.

In addition, Becky Parr, a registered nurse, has been hired as a nurse and assistant manager at Arcadia Center. Parr is an Arcadia native and has spent two decades working in health care in Arcadia.

A formal dedication and open house for the public will be from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 25, at Arcadia Center.

Appointments can be made at the new clinic by calling 608-323-1500.

□ □ □

MMR RESEARCH: Researchers at Marshfield Clinic have received a three-year award of more than \$700,000 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the effectiveness and possible adverse events from a third dose of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Marshfield Clinic is the only U.S. site in the study.

Current U.S. immunization standards call for a two-dose series of MMR vaccine. A combined vaccine has been available since 1971.

"Recent outbreaks of mumps have occurred in the U.S. among young adults who

had received two doses of the MMR vaccine, which suggests that the vaccine's effectiveness may decline over time," said Dr. Bradley Sullivan, one of the researchers. "This study will evaluate whether a third dose of MMR vaccine will be effective in increasing the immune response. It will also let us evaluate adverse effects related to a third vaccine dose."

The MMR3 study will include about 685 study subjects who will be enrolled with informed consent.

The MMR3 study is the continuation of a long-term collaboration with the CDC to follow this unique group of MMR2 study participants. A previous study — MMR2 — was undertaken in the 1990s to evaluate the effectiveness and assess adverse effects of a second MMR vaccine dose.

□ □ □

TYKE SAFETY: "They get into everything!" "I just turned my back for a minute and ..."

What parent hasn't said these things? Luther Midelfort will offer its annual free Safety Day for Tykes to help families learn how to keep their children safe.

Safety Day for Tykes will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, April 30, at the Luther Midelfort kiosk at Oakwood Mall, near the play area. Families can bring their 4- to 6-year-olds to the event to have fun while learning important safety lessons from Luther Midelfort health care providers.

Participants will learn what the brain and spinal cord do; see how a bicycle helmet keeps an egg — and your brain — from breaking; have an opportunity to buy a bike helmet; identify dangers in your home; and develop an evacuation plan.

For more information call 715-838-3532 or visit www.luthermidelfort.org.

Meetings & More

Send information to Christena O'Brien at Leader-Telegram, Attn: Christena O'Brien, 701 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, WI 54701 or christena.obrien@ecpc.com.

Special events

■ **"Lymphedema: Laugh & Learn,"** 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 28, Luther Midelfort Northland, conference room, 331 S. Main St., Suite H, Rice Lake. Free. Information: 715-236-8549.

■ **Self-defense class,** 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 29, Highland Fitness, 2221 Eastridge Center, Ed Hendricks, a retired Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department deputy, is teaching. Cost: Free for members and \$20 for nonmembers. Information: Shannon at 715-833-2100 or sseyforth@highlandfitness.com.

■ **Blood pressure/blood sugar clinics and cholesterol screenings,** 7 to 9 a.m. Monday, May 3, Red Cedar Medical Center, Education Center, 2321 Stout Road; 7 to 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 4, RCMC-Elmwood Clinic, 236 E. Springer Ave.; and 7 to 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 5, RCMC-Glenwood City Clinic, 219 E. Oak St. Blood pressure/blood sugar clinics are free, and no registration is required. The cost of cholesterol screenings is \$25, and those planning to be screened are asked to fast for 10 hours before the screening for accurate results. Registration for cholesterol screenings: 715-233-7464 or www.rcmc-mhs.org.

■ **"Sexuality in Recovery,"** 3 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 4, L.E. Phillips-Libertas Treat-

ment Center, 2661 Highway I, Chippewa Falls. The presenter is Tammy Bednar, a therapist at Omne Clinic in Eau Claire. Information: 715-723-5585 or 800-680-4578.

■ **"Wellness Retreats,"** 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 5, Natural Healing, 239 E. LaSalle Ave., Barron. The presenter for the public health forum is Heather DuBois. Free. Information: 715-637-1400.

■ **"Transcending Divorce,"** a six-week program for those experiencing divorce, 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, May 5 to June 9, The Healing Place, 1010 Oakridge Drive. Free. Registration: 715-717-6028 by Friday, April 30.

■ **"Raising Responsible Kids Without Raising Your Blood Pressure,"** 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, May 6, Off Broadway Banquet Center, 1501 S. Broadway St., Menomonie. The presenter is Charles Fay, a nationally certified school psychologist; consultant to schools, parent groups and mental health professionals; and parent. Free.

■ **"Create Respectful, Responsible Kids: Love and Logic Techniques for Educators,"** 9 a.m. to noon Friday, May 7, Off Broadway Banquet Center, 1501 S. Broadway St., Menomonie. The presenter at the event for educators and professionals working with children is Charles Fay. Cost: \$25 for participants from organizations in Dunn County and \$50 for participants from organizations outside of Dunn County. Registration: 715-233-7464 or www.rcmc-mhs.org by May 3. Information: www.DCPFY.org.