Commission on Cancer Report
2019–2020

Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center is accredited by the Commission on Cancer (CoC) and the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). These accreditation programs ensure health care providers offer the latest in evidence-based care and raise cancer awareness in the community. Baptist MD Anderson strives to improve the survival and quality of life for cancer patients by establishing prevention, education, research and quality of care standards.

Each year, our Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Committee reviews the community health needs assessment (CHNA) (baptistjax.com/about-us/social-responsibility/assessing-community-health-needs) that addresses health care disparities and barriers to cancer care to identify a community need.

**Prevention & Screening**

This year, our Cancer Committee focused on prevention and screening events (CoC Standards 4.1 & 4.2) to target head and neck cancer. According to the CHNA for Baptist Jacksonville in 2019, the rate of throat and mouth cancer in Duval County (15.8 cases per 100,000 population) is higher than the Florida state value of 13.4 cases per 100,000 population, pointing to a cultural and behavioral problem of smoking and tobacco use in the region. In addition, analysis of primary data collected from key informants and focus group participants in the CHNA found that education about cancer is lacking in the region, and most people do not understand how to take precautionary steps to prevent and identify various cancers early on.

To better serve the needs of head and neck cancer patients in our region, Baptist
MD Anderson conducted community head and neck cancer screenings on April 9 and April 11, 2019. Preventative education included providing smoking cessation guidance and emphasizing the importance of regular dental exams to reduce the risk of head and neck cancer. Screenings included a medical history review, physical exam and follow-up recommendations. One hundred forty two community members were screened and educated with 32 requiring further evaluation and 2 participants needing immediate consultations. Planning is underway for the 2020 prevention and screening event to take place during the annual Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week from April 13–19, 2020.

**Growth**

Baptist MD Anderson has also added two new physicians to its head and neck cancer team. Faisal Ahmad, MD, and William “Walsh” Thomas, MD, head and neck surgical oncologists, joined Russell Smith, MD, head and neck surgical oncologist, to provide the highest quality of care for patients with head and neck cancers. In addition to conducting screenings, the team specializes in head and neck cancer; head and neck surgical reconstruction after cancer; oral cavity cancer; salivary gland masses and cancer; neck masses; laryngeal cancer; hypopharyngeal cancer; thyroid/parathyroid masses and cancer; sinonasal cancer; skull base tumors; pituitary tumors; skin cancers of the head and neck; facial nerve paralysis and rehabilitation; and robotic surgery.
PATIENT STORY:
Power hitter
When head and neck cancer came for Timothy Parenton, he struck back.

Timothy Parenton, 58, the head coach of University of North Florida’s baseball team, had a sore throat. It was February 2019, and colds were common for him that time of year as he breathed in the damp, cooler air during practices and games, so he didn’t think much of it. He went to CareSpot, got some antibiotics and thought they would knock the illness out.

But 11 days later, his throat was still sore. His wife Shelia told him he needed to see an ENT.

Baptist Health ENT Specialists ordered a biopsy, which revealed stage II throat cancer. Parenton was immediately referred to Russell Smith, MD, head and neck surgical oncologist at Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center.

“What a blessing to be in the position where I could be treated by Baptist MD Anderson,” Parenton said. “From my first day there onward, I did whatever my physicians told me to do. I’ve coached baseball for 29 years, and I played football and baseball at Mississippi State. I grew up listening to my coaches and doing what they said, and that’s how I wanted to approach this.”

Parenton wanted to listen to the advice of his doctors and follow in the footsteps of his brother, who had beaten colon cancer 10 years before.
A multidisciplinary approach
To prepare for the chemotherapy and radiation to treat his throat cancer, Parenton saw many other members of the head and neck cancer multidisciplinary team. This included a speech and language pathologist, a nutritionist, and a dentist.

Shelly Kidwell and Anna Stallard, Parenton’s nutritionists, told him that he would lose a good amount of weight. His throat would be sore and he would temporarily lose his sense of taste, and his saliva would change, making it hard for him to eat. They recommended consuming as many calories as he could during treatment and eating soups and smoothies when he was not able to get down solid foods. While he did lose weight, he lost it gradually.

His speech and language pathologists Jennifer Schultz and Veronica Wasloski gave him exercises to help him with his swallowing, with the goal of avoiding a feeding tube and long-term problems with swallowing after the chemotherapy and radiation ended. Parenton continues to do his exercises on the car ride to work every day and has incorporated them into his daily routine.

An active lifestyle
Parenton’s treatment plan included getting chemotherapy once a week and radiation therapy five days a week. He began chemotherapy on Mondays, the one day his team has off during the season, and scheduled his radiation early in the morning on Monday through Friday so that he could head straight to practice from there.

His wife Shelia, who supported him throughout his cancer journey, insisted on driving him in for chemotherapy every Monday. After walking him to his appointment, she would head first to the chapel to pray and then set up her laptop to work on the third floor, on the seats overlooking the outdoor patio.

Whenever he came to Baptist MD Anderson, Parenton said he was impressed by how friendly the staff was. Everyone had a smile on their face, worked with him to accommodate his schedule, and asked him how the team was doing. He said that the facilities at Baptist MD Anderson are so impressive, but it’s the people working there who make it special.

“That’s the greatest thing about everyone at Baptist MD Anderson—they know who you are,” Parenton said. “To this day when I go back for my check-ups months later, everyone remembers my face and says hi.”

Throughout six rounds of chemo and seven weeks of radiation, Parenton only missed one baseball game.

“I really believe that remaining active and being around young athletes helped me to stay positive,” Parenton said. “I wanted to show the team that I was not going to give in.”

Parenton’s assistant coaches and the team’s trainer stepped up to help him out during treatment, and he kept them and the team updated about how the treatment was progressing.

“I’ve coached baseball for 29 years, and I played football and baseball at Mississippi State. I grew up listening to my coaches and doing what they said, and that’s how I wanted to approach this.”

Timothy Parenton, Head Coach, UNF Baseball
Moving forward
After completing chemotherapy and radiation, Parenton had a CT and PET scan in September 2019 to make sure all of the cancer had been destroyed by the treatment. There were some small lymph nodes remaining in the right side of his neck. Dr. Smith gave him the option of watching the lymph nodes to see if they slowly went away or surgically removing them to check for cancer, but Parenton wanted to get the nodes out to make sure he was cancer-free.

There was one stipulation—months before, Dr. Smith invited Parenton to join him for the Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center Golf Classic at TPC Sawgrass on October 17. Parenton wanted to play in the tournament, so he and Dr. Smith golfed on Thursday, and Dr. Smith operated on Parenton Friday morning.

Test results after the surgery came back negative. While Parenton will continue to be monitored, he does not need any further treatment at this time.

Parenton said the evolution in cancer treatment options gave him hope. His dad passed away from cancer in 1997 after it metastasized throughout his body, and the available treatments at that time were not as sophisticated.

“I know that every day the medical field is doing everything it can to cure cancer,” Parenton said. “Ten to 15 years ago, I don’t know if I would have had the same positive attitude and outcome. But, when I heard people ring that bell after they completed treatment, it kept me going.”