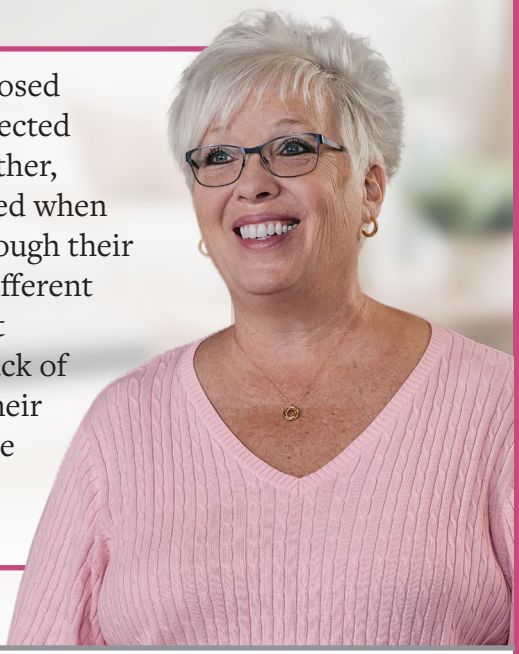
Integrated Model of Breast Cancer Treatment Delivers Improved Patient Care and Outcomes

When Peggy Sue was diagnosed with breast cancer, she expected to go through what her mother, sister and father experienced when she accompanied them through their cancer journeys — many different healthcare appointments at different locations, and a lack of communication between their doctors. "I had to make sure their test results got to the right doctor," she recalls.



With Orlando Health UF Health Cancer Center, Peggy Sue's experience was different from day one. "With one call, I was set up with three back-to-back appointments with three doctors in one place: a breast medical oncologist, a breast surgical oncologist and a radiation oncologist. Every week, my doctors sat down together and consulted on my case. Everybody was on the same page all the time, and they all cared so genuinely about me."

Peggy Sue also appreciated the scheduling, care coordination and support provided by her nurse navigator. "If ever I had a question about lab work or an appointment, she got back to me within an hour. I always knew that she had everything under control."

Today, Peggy Sue's mammograms are clear. "My cancer is gone, and I now go back to Orlando Health every six months for a checkup. I still feel supported with the reassurance of a healthcare team that's always there for me."

The coordinated care provided at Orlando Health UF Health Cancer Center is at the heart of its patient-focused healthcare model. The center is one of four state-designated Cancer Centers of Excellence, and the only one in Central Florida, meeting 15 performance standards focused on comprehensive and coordinated care.

Multidisciplinary members of the Breast Care Center's medical team — including medical, surgical and radiation oncologists as well as nurse navigators, pathologists and reconstructive surgeons —work together to provide the latest, evidence-based treatment for each patient's specific type and stage of cancer.

Studies indicate that the integrated model of care provided by Orlando Health UF Health Cancer Center results in a number of benefits for patients, including a shorter timeframe from diagnosis to treatment, and improved patient care and outcomes through an agreed-upon treatment plan. ■

A Life-Changing Experience in Body and Heart

When Paige recalls her journey beating breast cancer at Orlando Health UF Health Cancer Center, it's the personal connections and positive support she remembers most — at every stage of her treatment.

"When I started chemotherapy, I felt so much positive energy. Every time I went in, everyone was so supportive and gave me strength.

"At Orlando Health, there was a feeling of family with a level of teamwork that I've never seen anywhere else," recalls Paige.

The personal support Paige felt affected her so deeply that she decided to be a part of helping others experience what she did. She did just that by retiring from a 30-year career with Orange County Public Schools. Today, she's a volunteer coordinator with Orlando Health.

"I don't think it's possible for another healthcare organization to do what Orlando Health does on the level that Orlando Health does it, because it's that unique. From the minute you arrive, you feel like you are the only and most important patient. Every need is going to be met, regardless of how large or how small," she says. "Today, I feel 100 percent healthy. What started out as a terrifying diagnosis for me turned into something that positively changed my life for the better." ■