



# Academic Cancer Care in a Community Setting

*Convenience, competence, and compassion deliver a powerful combination at Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers.*

**Cancer is a life-altering word.** Whether it's an official diagnosis or just a possibility on the table, hearing "cancer" often strikes fear into the hearts of those who hear it.

But patients in the Metro Phoenix area never have to carry the burden alone.

The team at Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers understands the magnitude of a cancer journey. They deliver the technology, expertise, and social-emotional resources to make every step as seamless and comfortable as possible.

"What makes us special is that we offer integrative, multidisciplinary care under one roof—and with numerous locations—so that excellent care is always accessible," says Zabita Singh, M.D., medical oncologist. "From medical, radiation, and surgical oncology to genetic counseling, social workers, nutritionists, and support groups, we deliver care that supports the whole patient."

### Patients First

Colleagues work closely and congenially at Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers. Weekly tumor boards convene to discuss every patient's progress from multiple perspectives. "We collaborate to make the best treatment decisions

for each particular patient in terms of their specific diagnosis and also their unique values and goals," says Dr. Singh.

Clinical trials are available for patients who may benefit from an emerging therapy not yet available to the wider public.

Many patients embrace this opportunity to optimize their outcomes and contribute to the future of healthcare. "Sometimes patients worry that they're being a guinea pig when they elect for a clinical trial, but it's important for them to understand that we won't recommend this option unless we believe it's good for that specific patient," says Manisha Chandar, D.O., medical oncologist.

### Exceptional Accessibility

One of the most critical aspects of cancer care is simply the ability to access it. Thanks to Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers' vision to reach as many Arizona populations as possible, the practice offers 15 locations throughout the state. "We're constantly looking to expand our footprint to reach the patients who need us most," says Dr. Singh. "Chemotherapy treatment, for example, is a marathon, not a sprint. We want to provide locations for quality therapy that are near as many people as possible."

Appointment availability is also a cornerstone of the practice. When patients call, the team strives to make room for them to be seen at the earliest ability, particularly when a diagnosis has already been established. "Some institutions have a wait list of six

months or more to get in, and the anxiety that puts on a patient is extreme," says Joseph Di Como, M.D., breast surgeon. "We do our best to see patients quickly."

In addition, telemedicine has been a game changer in terms of the speed and frequency of patient appointments. When a concern arises, patients can often bypass the commute and waiting room times to receive prompt and thorough care from the comfort of their home. These appointments may resolve their concerns entirely, or they can help determine whether an in-person appointment is indeed necessary. This virtual structure improves treatment efficiency and overall treatment effectiveness, as potential problems can be caught and managed earlier.

### Leadership and Longevity

That fact that Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers has been serving and growing in Arizona since 1993 speaks to its track record of consistent quality and compassionate care. "Our leadership is really excellent," says Dr. Chandar. "Our founder leads with a lot of integrity, and that pervades the entire organization. We're all in this because we really want to make a difference in patients' lives."

As a physician-owned practice, each team member embraces their responsibility to uphold the values of the team at large. "Our longevity speaks to how well we've taken care of patients, and our vision is to continue offering the most state-of-the-art cancer care available," says Dr. Di Como.

As the team continues to explore, evaluate, and incorporate emerging therapies and updated guidelines, immunotherapy and targeting treatments will continue to play increasing roles in the effectiveness and personalization of cancer care.

### Prevention and Purpose

While many cancers are sporadic, meaning they emerge without the presence of specific lifestyle factors, there are certainly habits that can contribute to the likelihood of cancer's arrival.

Ceasing smoking, minimizing alcohol, and adopting a protein- and vegetable-rich diet are wise choices for warding off the chances of cancer. "We're also starting to see studies that confirm organic fruits and vegetables make a difference, and I think we're going to see more research in the future showing that the quality of our food is an important factor in overall health," says Dr. Di Como.

Also, early screening is key. Genetic counseling is a powerful resource in helping patients understand their lifetime risk for certain cancers based on family history and unique cellular makeup. "For breast cancer, we recommend annual screenings beginning at age 40," says Dr. Di Como. "Based on family history and genetic testing, screening may need to start earlier."

Whether a patient is engaging in preventative care, seeking diagnosis, or actively fighting to overcome a confirmed cancer, Ironwood Cancer & Research Centers is a dedicated partner in meeting patients where they are.

"It takes a special kind of person to go into oncology. We all have one thing in common, and that is that we feel what we're doing is meaningful," concludes Dr. Chandar. "That's what we deliver to every patient who comes to Ironwood."



Zabita Singh, M.D.



Joseph Di Como, M.D.



Manisha Chandar, D.O.



**Ironwood Cancer  
& Research Centers**

*Outsmarting Cancer One Patient at a Time™*

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