

## Experts at the Forefront of Care

**DR. JOSEPH GEENEN:  
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INHERITED PANCREATIC CANCER**

**PATIENT PROFILE  
LIVER TRANSPLANT  
PROVIDES NEW HOPE  
FOR CANCER PATIENT**

**EMERGING SUB-SPECIALTY:  
INTERVENTIONAL PULMONOLOGY**

**INNOVATIVE NEW TREATMENTS  
FOR HEAD & NECK CANCER**

Cancer Care is a publication of Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Aurora St. Luke's is a destination facility for advanced care of all types and attracts patients from throughout the country. Aurora St. Luke's is recognized as a leading center for cancer, heart and neurological services, and has pioneered numerous procedures and technologies within the region.

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**On the Cover**  
 Joseph Geenen, MD,  
 Director of the Aurora St. Luke's  
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*Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit Wisconsin health care provider and a national leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care. Aurora offers care at sites in more than 90 communities throughout eastern Wisconsin.*



# New Initiative Targets Inherited Pancreatic Cancer

When Dr. Randy Pausch of Carnegie Mellon University recently fought his very public battle against pancreatic cancer, many Americans were introduced to the disease for the first time. While his memorable "Last Lecture" focused on the importance of pursuing individual dreams, it also served as a poignant reminder of the terrible toll that pancreatic cancer exacts. Other celebrities who have suffered from the disease include Michael Landon, Gene Upshaw and Luciano Pavarotti.

**"Most people don't know that there is a mechanism to detect pancreatic cancer early and to save their lives"**

According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), new cases of pancreatic cancer diagnosed in 2008 totaled 37,680, with 34,290 deaths. This translates to a mortality rate of more than 90%, making the disease one of the most deadly cancers. It's also a fact that approximately 10% of those diagnosed with pancreatic cancer have an inherited form of the disease.

Joseph Geenen, MD, director of the Aurora St. Luke's Pancreatobiliary Center, recently developed an innovative screening program specifically for such high-risk individuals. The Familial Pancreatic Cancer Program at Aurora St. Luke's, seeks to identify those at high risk of pancreatic cancer and to provide early diagnosis and treatment.

As Dr. Geenen explains, "Two studies have shown that if we screen the high-risk patients, we can significantly change the prognosis of those who develop cancer. If we catch pancreatic cancer early, we can intervene surgically – removing most or half or all of the pancreas. The five-year survival rate for such patients is almost 100%."

Individuals at high risk of inherited pancreatic cancer most often have two or more first-degree relatives (mother, father, brother, sister) with pancreatic cancer. Smoking further increases the risk for these individuals.

"At Aurora St. Luke's, anytime we have a patient with pancreatic cancer, we try to get the whole family screened," says Dr. Geenen. "It's very important for them to see a genetic counselor to determine if they are high risk. If they are, we refer

them to a gastroenterologist to detect any signs of the disease."

Increasing awareness is the biggest challenge for the Familial Pancreatic Cancer Initiative, according to Dr. Geenen. "Most people don't know that there is a mechanism to detect pancreatic cancer early and to save their lives."

The Familial Pancreatic Cancer Initiative was kicked-off at an event in July 2008, attended by an estimated 300 people. For additional information on the program, please call 414-649-6892.

## FACTS ABOUT PANCREATIC CANCER

Fourth leading cause of cancer death in the U.S.

NCI estimates for 2008:

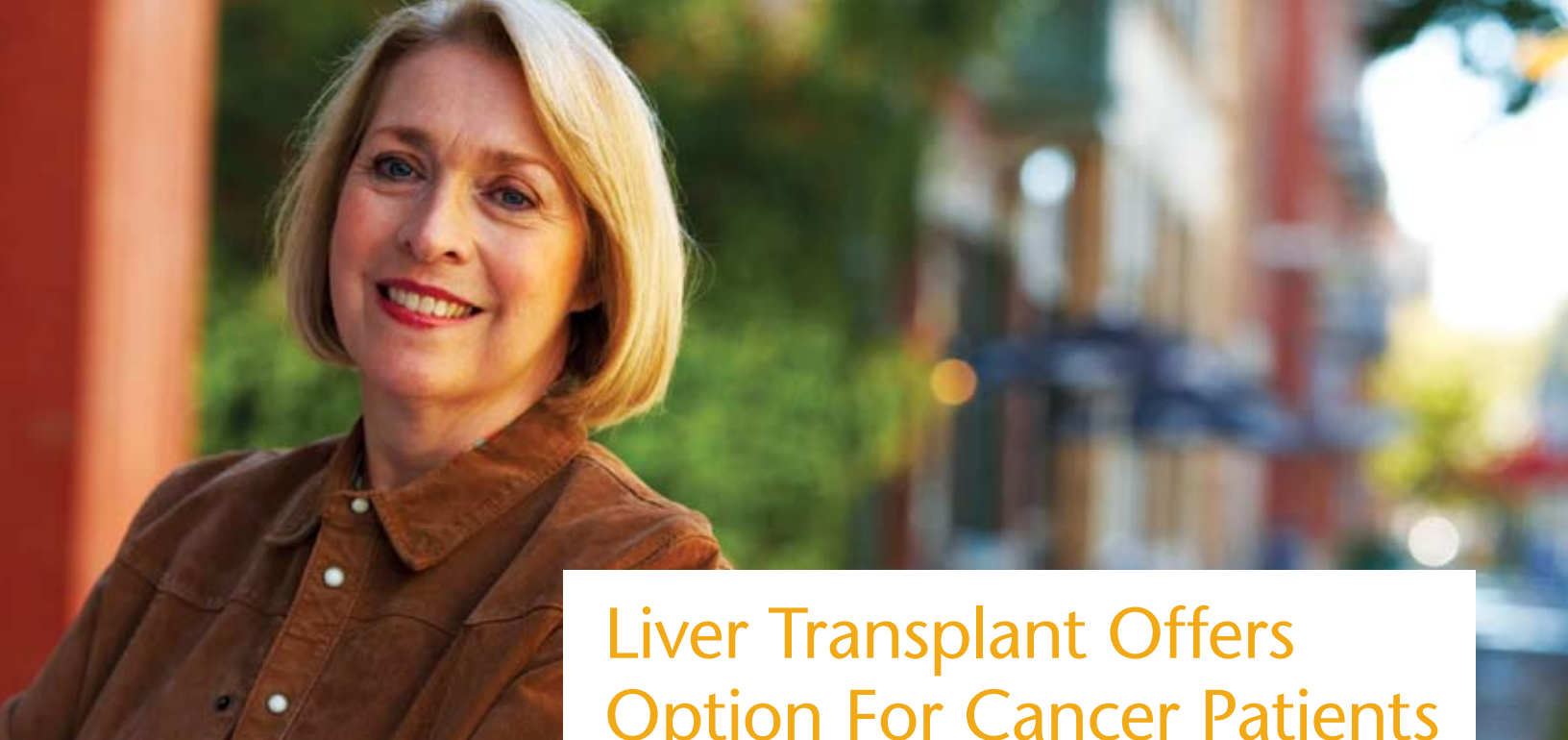
- 37,680 new cases
- 34,290 deaths

Approximately 10% of patients have a family history of the disease

According to American Cancer Society:

- 90% of patients are older than 55
- Smokers are 2 to 3 times more likely to get the disease





## Liver Transplant Offers Option For Cancer Patients



Ajay Sahajpal, MD



Jeffrey Steers, MD

The Aurora St. Luke's Liver Transplant Program is one of fewer than 130 liver transplant programs in the U.S., specializing in the treatment of patients with end-stage liver disease, including those with complex conditions such as hepatocellular cancer, cholangiocarcinoma and hepatobiliary cancer. Increasingly, liver transplant may also be an option for patients with cancers that have originated elsewhere in the body.

Transplant surgeon Jeffrey Steers, MD, explains: "Colorectal cancer frequently spreads to the liver. In times past, that was more or less a death sentence. But in the last 15 years, numerous treatments have been devised to allow either a surgical cure or long-term treatment for such patients. Certainly resection (removing part of the liver), when there's cancer involved that has spread from the colon, can provide cure in some patients. When we do offer a transplant for a patient, it's because resection is not feasible, for one reason or another. So transplant then becomes a second consideration."

"Patients need to know that there are other options," says transplant surgeon Ajay Sahajpal, MD. "We tend to have a very aggressive approach when it comes to cancer" (see related story).

The result is new hope for more cancer patients.

"Aurora St. Luke's has made a tremendous commitment to transplant services," says Dr. Steers, "and to providing those in the best possible manner to benefit patients."

"We have a committed team that is always willing to do whatever it takes. That team consists of specialists in probably 10 different areas – from nursing to physician coordinators, everyone from the ground up. All of the elements that are needed to provide the best possible outcomes."

Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center has been performing organ transplants for 40 years and is ranked in the top 10% of hospitals nationwide for volume of transplant procedures.

**HEPATOCELLULAR CANCER** – Primary form of liver cancer in adults. Originates in the hepatocyte cells of the liver. A liver transplant is often a viable option when the disease is in the liver only and has not spread.

**CHOLANGIOCARCINOMA** – A rare cancer originating in the liver. Involves a malignant growth in one of the ducts connecting the liver and gall bladder to the small intestine.

**HEPATOBIILIARY CANCER** – Involves malignant growths on the liver, bile ducts or biliary tract. Relatively rare in the U.S.

## Life-Saving Liver Transplant Provides New Hope

For four long years, Sandy Arndt of Milwaukee had been battling liver cancer. But it wasn't until this past October that she got the help she needed – in the form of a liver transplant at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center.

The rare, life-saving procedure attracted attention throughout the region, primarily because liver cancer patients are usually not considered good candidates for transplantation.

**"We just want people to understand that there are a number of different options."**

As Sandy's liver cancer progressed, she became weaker and was forced back into the hospital this past summer. Knowing that chemotherapy had failed to halt the disease, she seemed to be out of options. But at the urging of family members, she sought a second opinion from Drs. Jeffrey Steers and Ajay Sahajpal, transplant surgeons at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center.

Upon examination, Dr. Sahajpal identified Sandy as having a rare, slow-growing neuroendocrine tumor. "Just seeing her tumor and how long she had

been living with it, and that it hadn't progressed outside her liver – I thought she was a favorable candidate to pursue another option," explains Dr. Sahajpal.

Two weeks later, a donor organ was located. In an exhausting ten-hour surgery, doctors removed Sandy's cancer-ravaged liver and put her on the road to recovery.

A few weeks after the surgery, Dr. Sahajpal expressed confidence that Sandy's cancer won't return. "Nothing is 100%, but given the pathology of the tumor and the way her story presented, there's a very small chance of recurrence."

The message for patients suffering from liver cancer? "We just want people to

understand that there are a number of different options," explains Dr. Steers, "and the diagnosis, by itself, doesn't always mean that you're out of options."

From Sandy Arndt, the message is simple: "Never lose hope. I was turned-down twice for a liver transplant at other hospitals and then heard about Aurora St. Luke's. It definitely pays to get a second opinion."

When interviewed shortly before the Holidays, Sandy was already back living life to the fullest. "I'm feeling really great, better than I have in years. I'm able to get out of the house, go shopping and meet with friends for lunch. And I'm looking forward to Spring so I can do more walking."

Sandy and her daughter-in-law, Rosa, enjoy lunch in downtown Milwaukee.





Steven Leh, MD

## Emerging Sub-Specialty: Interventional Pulmonology

The comprehensive Lung Cancer Program at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center treats more lung cancer patients than any other hospital in Wisconsin and also offers the widest range of treatment options.

At Aurora St. Luke's, expert physicians have access to the very latest technology, and are making significant inroads in the battle against cancers within the chest. One such expert is Steven Leh, MD, an interventional pulmonologist. His area of expertise involves using minimally invasive techniques to visualize and biopsy tissue in the airways of the lungs. In the least invasive way, Dr. Leh is able to not only more accurately assess if a patient has lung cancer, but also possibly prevent the patient from undergoing an unnecessary invasive procedure or surgery.

"Interventional pulmonology is an emerging sub-specialty of pulmonary medicine," explains Dr. Leh. "It is advanced training in minimally invasive procedures for the diagnosis and treatment of cancers."

One of the important new tools being used at Aurora St. Luke's to more accurately diagnose and stage lung cancer is endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS). The procedure uses an endoscope, a thin flexible tube used to look inside the lungs, equipped with ultrasound and fine-gauge needle to access the surgical site via the patient's mouth. The ultrasound images allow the physician to thoroughly examine the patient's airways, blood vessels and lungs, as well as access difficult-to-reach lymph nodes for needle biopsy.

The speed and accuracy of the EBUS procedure helps ensure the most accurate staging of the patient's disease.

Importantly, the EBUS procedure is minimally invasive. No incisions are required, recovery times are short and patients can usually go home the same day.

**"We all work together to make sure the patient gets the best possible care."**

As Wisconsin's volume leader in the number of cancer patients treated, Aurora Health Care offers cancer patients the advantage of unmatched experience and a team approach to care.

"Whether it's a thoracic surgeon, a medical oncologist or an interventional pulmonologist, we all work together to make sure that the patient gets the best possible care," says Dr. Leh, who joined Aurora St. Luke's after completing an interventional pulmonology fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania.

"I came to St. Luke's primarily because of their commitment to treating patients with cancer," he explains. "They were committed to my field. Interventional pulmonology is an emerging field with new technologies. Aurora St. Luke's was committed to providing me with the equipment that I needed."



At a handful of cancer centers around the country, new and evolving technologies are changing the way physicians treat head and neck cancers, and minimizing much of the pain and suffering that accompanies the disease.

## Innovative New Treatments For Head & Neck Cancer



Christopher Long, MD



Michael Nordstrom, MD

At leading cancer centers around the country, new and evolving technologies are changing the way physicians treat head and neck cancers, and helping patients avoid some of the pain and suffering that accompanies the disease.

Head and neck cancer experts Christopher Long, MD, and Michael Nordstrom, MD, lead the effort at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center, using minimally-invasive technologies such as transoral laser microsurgery and CyberKnife® radiosurgery.

"The majority of otolaryngologists in private practice don't work in tertiary care facilities such as Aurora St. Luke's. So they aren't doing the more complex cases," explains Dr. Long. "And that's where our expertise comes into play. At Aurora St. Luke's we take care of some of the more complicated benign and malignant processes that occur in the head and neck."

**"Many referring physicians aren't aware of these important new treatments"**

– Christopher Long, MD

Transoral laser microsurgery is one of the innovative new treatments being performed at Aurora St. Luke's. In the procedure, a microscope and laser are used to view and remove cancerous tissue. All of the instruments reach the surgical site through the mouth, avoiding the need for traditional open surgery. Importantly, the procedure has significantly less impact on the patient, in both the short and long-term.

Another innovative treatment tool currently being used for certain head and neck tumors is the CyberKnife radiosurgery system. The CyberKnife is extremely precise and uses focused beams of radiation and sub-millimeter accuracy to treat the most complex tumors. Because CyberKnife treatment is minimally invasive, it often is used on tumors that are difficult to reach or would otherwise require the removal of large amounts of tissue. CyberKnife treatment is less painful than traditional surgery and no anesthesia or incisions are required.

"Many referring physicians aren't aware of these important new treatments for head and neck cancer," says Dr. Long. "And some aren't even aware that this level of specialty exists at Aurora St. Luke's."

"Here we have the privilege of working with physicians from other specialties, all under the same roof: radiation oncologists, hematology oncologists, cardiothoracic physicians, and neurosurgeons. We all work together. It makes a big difference."

To learn more about the advanced treatments available for head and neck cancer at Aurora St. Luke's, please contact our Second Opinion Program at 888-649-6892.

*The philanthropic efforts of Judy Gardetto and her late husband, John, helped bring the CyberKnife to Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center.*

## Continuing To Make A Difference In The Lives Of Others

At Aurora St. Luke's, we strive to make sure our cancer patients not only receive the most experienced and advanced care, but also a superior patient experience.

From advanced diagnostic technology and new treatment tools, to innovative programs for screening and detection – every cancer patient at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center has benefited from the generosity of donors who cared enough to make a difference in the lives of others.

We ask that you please consider a donation to the Vince Lombardi Cancer Center, or The Greatest Needs Fund, supporting the immediate and ongoing needs of Aurora St. Luke's. As a nonprofit hospital your tax deductible contributions are vital to our life saving mission.

To make a donation, or for more information, please call 414-649-7194, or visit our Web site [www.Aurora.org/Philanthropy](http://www.Aurora.org/Philanthropy).

*Look for your next issue of Cancer Care featuring:*

### **Robotic-Assisted Surgery for Bladder and Kidney Cancer**

Drs. Mark Waples and Ken Jacobsohn are advancing the role of cancer care in southeastern Wisconsin with this minimally invasive robotic-assisted surgery.