

Message from the Director: Serving an important area

By Mark Evers, MD, UK Markey Cancer Center Director



Kentucky now has the unfortunate distinction of being first among all 50 states in overall cancer mortality and cancer incidence (covering all cancer sites). Our cancer problem is distinct and prevalent, which underscores Markey's mission to reduce the cancer mortality in our region. Fortunately, our colleagues here are doing their part to make a difference in the lives of our patients, and many of them are going above and beyond by becoming more directly involved in communities and organizations that fight the cancer battle alongside Markey every day.

The stories in our spotlights and newsfeed on our home page have shown you how people with Markey connections are serving individuals whose lives are forever changed with a cancer diagnosis. For example, Dr. Jonathan Feddock saw a need for improvements in the brachytherapy program and is now training for an IRONMAN to raise a goal of \$200,000 to help make those upgrades possible. Many of you have also participated in the LLS Light the Night Walk and supported the American Cancer Society Relay for Life.

In order to better understand the impact cancer has on a person's entire life and to illustrate how some of our former patients – now survivors – have overcome those challenges, we hosted the inaugural Expressions of Courage event in June, National Cancer Survivorship Month. This event, made possible by gifts from the Markey Cancer Foundation and Biological Systems Consulting, Inc. and organized and led by Carla Repass, Assistant Director for Administration, and fellow Markey staff members Christie Daniels, Valeria Moore and Mincha Parker, featured more than 30 artists who shared their cancer experience with individual artwork. Experiencing the vibrant, personal, and emotional artwork our survivors created to convey their experience with cancer allowed us to see them in a new light, and it was an emotional and overwhelmingly positive day.

Finally, we are trying to reach beyond current patients and educate the broader community on cancer, its effects, and its prevention. Our comprehensive cancer screening, education, prevention, and outreach program serves the citizens of the state, with a particular focus on Eastern Kentucky while also serving people statewide. In the past few months, we have reached approximately 1,300 people through health fairs, educational events, and screening opportunities. Nearly 12,000 pieces of screening materials have been distributed. Markey's Community Program Director, Melissa Hounshell, is working very closely with Kentucky Cancer Link and others to provide colon, breast and skin cancer screenings.

In our everyday work and in our free time, we are going the extra mile to make sure our patients have every opportunity for positive outcomes in their care.

Page last updated: 8/20/2014 10:49:39 AM