

Connection

NEWPORT HOSPITAL • 2025

Grateful Patient Gives Thanks and Gives Back



“We’re really lucky to have that wonderful hospital right here in our community.”

—Diane Daddario-Pfautz, Newport Hospital patient and volunteer.

Newport Hospital’s reputation for delivering exceptional patient experiences is well-known. Diane Daddario-Pfautz, who receives ongoing treatment through the Brown University Health Cancer Institute at Newport Hospital, is but one example of how grateful patients are expertly and compassionately cared for at the hospital.

“The caregivers at Newport Hospital are personable and address all of your questions and concerns,” Diane says. “They treat you more like a friend than a patient and the environment is very warm and intimate.”

That level of comfort and confidence, Diane adds, has made a positive impact on her health and well-being—and inspired her to give back to the hospital.

A long road

Diane was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1995. It was discovered on a mammogram, and she underwent a lumpectomy at a Connecticut hospital to remove her tumor. Chemotherapy and radiation followed. Treatment was successful, and Diane was able to resume her active lifestyle for many years thereafter.

But in 2014, Diane, now living in Newport, began experiencing debilitating back pain. She went for a diagnostic scan at Newport Hospital, which revealed multiple tumors in her spine. Diane was sent to Rhode Island Hospital to undergo precisely targeted, high-dose

radiation treatments delivered via CyberKnife, a robotic radiosurgery system. From that point to the present, Diane’s cancer care has been managed under the watchful eye of Newport Hospital staff. “I’ve been stable for 10 years,” she says proudly.

For the past few years, Diane’s regimen at the Cancer Institute has included estrogen-blocker injections once a month, lab work and bone-building infusion therapy every three months, and a full-body scan every six months.

Reiki to the rescue

Diane was introduced to Reiki, a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation, shortly after she was first diagnosed with cancer. The hospital she received treatment at would offer patients the complementary, hands-on energy therapy after chemo or radiation as a way as to reduce side effects and boost their immune system. Diane found the therapy so profoundly beneficial that she became a practitioner and earned certification as a Reiki master. Pre-COVID, Diane began volunteering at Newport Hospital and performing Reiki on other cancer patients, a practice she’s returned to in recent years.

Reflecting on her healthcare journey, Diane says, “We’re really lucky to have that wonderful hospital right here in our community. You don’t have to go up to Boston. You’re going to get the same care here and it’s so close. It’s like my home away from home.”

Outdoor Therapeutic Space Coming to Newport Hospital



Soon, Newport Hospital patients will have access to an outdoor therapeutic space on campus that will support their healing and recovery, enhance their physical functionality, and promote their overall health and well-being.



“The space, which will be located just outside the main elevator lobby on the first floor, will be available to all Newport Hospital patients,” says Pamela Mace, Director of Facilities Services & Planning at Brown University Health, “but it will be outfitted with a special focus on serving patients from our Vanderbilt Rehabilitation and Brown Health Cancer centers.” The new environment, she adds, will offer those patients a combination of simulation equipment, sensory features, and natural elements to foster a holistic, enhanced patient experience and mimic real-world conditions.

“We designed the space to provide patients with an opportunity to navigate many of the obstacles they will encounter when they return home,” Pam explains, “like walking on gravel, grass, and uneven surfaces; climbing stairs and ramps; stepping on curbs; or opening a gate or a mailbox.”

In the future, the goal is to have aromatic plants, such as lavender and rosemary, abound in the space to create a “garden-like” environment that stimulates patients’ senses. Sun/shade seating throughout will also be part of

the layout to accommodate private conversations, quiet reflection, or relaxation.

In addition to serving its intended population, it’s expected that the aesthetically pleasing space will be particularly beneficial to patients with developmental or motor coordination challenges, seniors needing fall prevention and balance training, and people receiving treatment for behavioral health issues. It will also be a welcoming, restorative spot for those simply seeking respite during an extended hospitalization.

“Once completed, the space will be a transformative addition to Newport Hospital that will help a lot of people,” Pam concludes.

The multi-staged effort to create the outdoor therapeutic environment gets underway soon and should be completed later this year or in early 2026.

The outdoor therapeutic space is being funded, in large part, by philanthropy. A lead gift from BankNewport and additional support from Pariseault Builders will help to make this dream project a reality, and Newport Hospital is grateful to these donors for their generosity.

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