



A NOVEL APPROACH TO CANCER CARE

TREATING THE WHOLE PATIENT

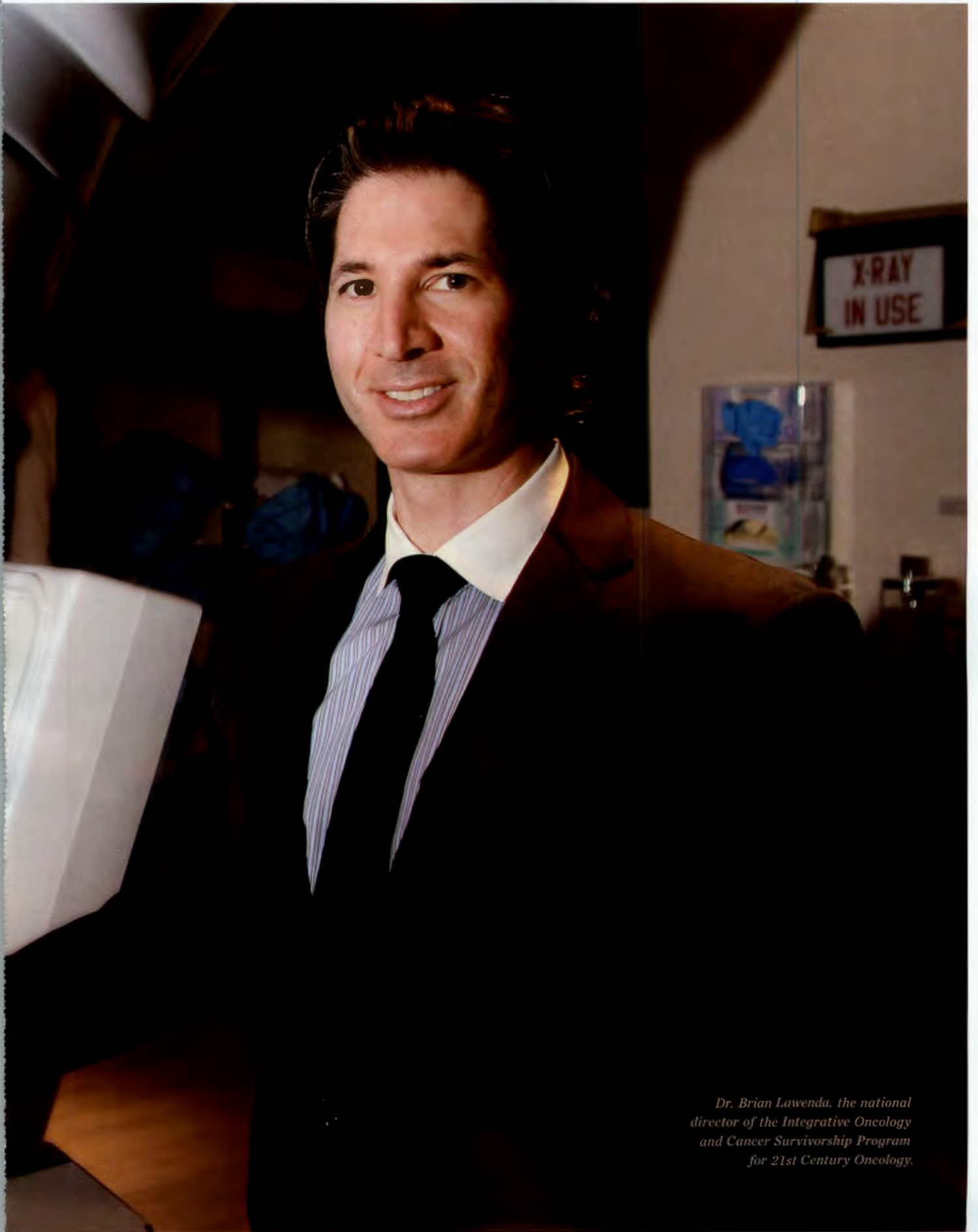
By Sara Costanza

2^{1st} Century Oncology of Las Vegas launched the Integrative Oncology and Cancer Survivorship Program for cancer patients and survivors this spring.

The program offers comprehensive, evidence-informed recommendations to promote an anti-cancer lifestyle - combining three essential components to cancer care: conventional treatments (i.e., radiation therapy, chemotherapy and surgery), complementary treatments (i.e., acupuncture, massage) and lifestyle changes (i.e. anti-cancer nutrition, exercise and stress reduction).

Harvard-trained, board-certified radiation oncologist and Stanford/UCLA-trained medical acupuncturist, Dr. Brian Lawenda is the national director of the Integrative Oncology and Cancer Survivorship Program for 21st Century Oncology. With a steady

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source of credible medical research supporting the benefits of this approach, patients are becoming more aware of the potential to maximize their cancer care and personal health. The methods are being piloted in Las Vegas with the goal of rolling out similar programs in other 21st Century Oncology centers across the U.S.

“This program is designed to help guide patients through their treatment and survivorship using a whole systems approach,” says Lawenda. “By educating our patients and coaching them about the importance of combining conventional and complementary treatments with lifestyle changes, we empower them to manage side effects and symptoms and make lasting changes that make the body less conducive to cancer.”

As part of their cancer care, patients who enroll in the program learn about helpful diet changes, stress reduction tips, and the safe and effective use of supplements and complementary therapies (i.e., acupuncture, massage, yoga, etc). Patients also receive customized survivorship care planning to help maintain the anti-cancer lifestyle after treatment.

The introduction of this in-office Integrative Oncology and Cancer Survivorship Program represents a significant leap forward in offering a more holistic, personalized approach to Integrative Oncology and survivorship care planning for local cancer patients.

Dr. Constantine Mantz, chief medical officer for 21st Century Oncology, the nation’s largest integrated cancer care provider, recognizes the importance of this Integrative Medicine approach.

“The Integrative Oncology and Cancer Survivorship Program offers patients practical and scientifically-informed information



about how to best maximize their care,” says Dr. Mantz. “Integrated Cancer Care has been our operating model for over 30 years, and providing these resources directly to patients will prove invaluable to their care.”

We sat down with Lawenda to find out more.

Q. What does Integrative Oncology mean?

Integrative Oncology is a comprehensive approach to cancer care based on combining anti-cancer lifestyle changes, evidence-informed complementary and alternative therapies, and the latest,

state-of-the-art cancer treatments. The goal is to improve the lives of people affected by cancer and to help them increase their sense of hope and control. This is for patients who want to know what *else* they can do (besides optimize cancer outcomes and minimize side effects).

Many patients come to me looking for relief from the various side effects and complications that can occur during and after cancer treatment, such as anxiety, stress, pain, nausea and sleeping problems. Our program is personalized to each patient and teaches him or her how to identify, reduce or prevent these problems. Integrative Oncology encourages living a healthy, anti-cancer lifestyle to help the body in its natural abilities to fight and prevent cancer. This can be accomplished by learning strategies to reduce stress, increasing physical activity and eating healthfully. Patients and cancer survivors who adopt these lifestyle goals will help change their internal physiology in ways that have been shown to strengthen the immune system, decrease systemic inflammation, reduce (free radical) oxidative damage to cells, and decrease hormonal stimulation of cancer cells.

Q. How can patients in Las Vegas access an Integrative Oncology program?

In 2009, I created Integrative Oncology-Essentials and the Anti-Cancerize Me Program to teach patients and anyone else interested in health and cancer about Integrative Oncology online, from the convenience of their home. With the launch of our Las Vegas Integrative Oncology program, I have been able to enroll all interested patients from our practice, as well as patients from other groups, into a structured, face-to-face Integrative Oncology program. We are the only oncology practice in Las Vegas with a robust integrative oncology program and a dedicated Integrative Oncologist who sees patients specifically for Integrative Oncology consultations and follow-up visits. Any patient seen at our office for this program must be a cancer patient or cancer survivor.

Q. If someone is diagnosed with cancer, what conventional treatments are available?

The earlier cancer is detected the more options a patient has in treatment and the more effective it is. Our expert team of physicians provides those facing a cancer diagnosis with state-of-the-art radiation therapy and the most sophisticated, compassionate care available.

Radiation Oncology often works in tandem with surgery, pharmaceuticals and chemotherapy. It is relatively quick, pain-free and requires no sedation. Advanced radiation technologies deliver more precise targeting and treatment than ever before, reducing the risk of side effects.

Q. And what are some of the Integrative Oncology treatments available?

A complementary therapy is often described as any therapy that is used in addition to conventional treatment (surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, pharmaceuticals, etc.). Integrative Oncologists often recommend complementary therapies to patients, as long as there is high-quality evidence of safety and effectiveness. Complementary therapies may include massage, acupuncture, meditation, and botanical supplements. This is in addition to lifestyle counseling: making changes for the better in

anti-cancer nutrition, exercise programs, stress reduction and reducing exposures to toxins.

Nutrition is one of the most important elements in Integrative Oncology. Patients will learn about anti-cancer nutrition, as well as foods and recipes that can help through and after cancer treatment. Physical activity and exercise are important before, during and after a diagnosis of cancer. They have been proven to reduce the risk of cancer development, recurrence and progression and to help minimize side effects of cancer treatment.

Pain and discomfort can be a huge issue for many cancer patients. Although pain medications still may be needed, there are numerous non-pharmacologic, complementary therapies that can be used along with or instead of these medications. I often recommend acupuncture, guided-imagery, meditation, massage, aromatherapy or referrals to other specialists when needed (i.e. pain management, physical therapy, etc.) It is important to recognize that Integrative Oncology is based on the collaboration with our patients' entire healthcare team to get them through their treatments with the best possible outcomes.

Spiritual support along with involving loved ones can improve outlook and help cope throughout treatment. We also recommend individual and family counseling, and support groups when they are available.

To learn more about the Integrative Oncology and Cancer Survivorship Program, visit www.integrativeoncology-essentials.com. ☐



Patients are able to take home this test kit to measure salivary cortisol, a chronic stress marker.

Sara Costanza is physician liaison at 21st Century Oncology.