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***Sutter Solano Cancer Center's Genetic Counseling Details Cancer Risk***

*For some patients, the answers are in their genes*

**VALLEJO, Calif.**—One in three Americans will be diagnosed with cancer in his or her lifetime. To help patients find answers, Sutter Solano Cancer Center (SSCC) now offers a cancer risk program that educates patients on how genetics determine their liability of cancer.

The program, led by board-certified Genetic Counselor Maude Blundell, M.S., CGC, includes genetic counseling, testing, risk assessment and screening recommendations. Identification of individuals at high risk of cancer can allow for intensified screening and preventive treatments to reduce the risk of cancer.

“There’s a great need for these services in the North Bay,” Blundell says. “Sutter Solano Cancer Center is keeping pace with technology and the ever-changing field of genetics by offering cancer risk genetic counseling to its patients.”

Some patients referred to Blundell have been diagnosed with cancer at an earlier age than would be expected and want to understand their risk of developing a second cancer or if family members may be at increased risk. Others have a strong family history of cancer and want to know if they are also at risk for the disease.

“An individual diagnosed with breast cancer under age 45 or with colon cancer under age 50 would be a good candidate for genetic counseling,” Blundell says.

Blundell explains the top priorities in her practice are to:

- Determine the likelihood that cancer in a family is inherited

- Discuss options for early identification and risk reduction
- Provide information about the benefits, risks and limitations of genetic testing
- Coordinate the testing process and accurately interpret the results
- Give referrals for appropriate research studies

“I begin all my patient relationships by trying to understand their concerns, which most often centers around their children,” Blundell says. The counseling session includes explaining basic genetics and gathering an extensive family health history. “We determine which screenings may be appropriate and discuss the pros and cons of genetic testing, and then the patient decides whether to proceed.”

Blundell makes clear that early screening for cancer, such as mammograms, colonoscopies and pap tests, are the first defense against cancer. Patients should talk to their physician about their risk and have a thorough knowledge of their family health history. To learn more about the genetic counseling and testing services available at SSSC, call 707-551-3400 or visit [suttersolano.org/cancer](http://suttersolano.org/cancer).

### **About Sutter Solano Medical Center**

*For more than 100 years, SSMC has been committed to the community by providing emergency care, delivering babies, and serving others in time of need. The medical center has 102 licensed beds and is fully accredited by The Joint Commission, an independent, non-profit with the mission to continuously improve the safety and quality of care provided to the public.*

*Sutter Solano Cancer Center is fully accredited by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons—a recognition only one in four cancer centers receive. Comprehensive cancer services include chemotherapy, infusion therapy, laboratory and pathology, pain management and radiation therapy.*

*SSMC is part of Sutter Health, a not-for-profit network of hospitals, doctors, and nurses who share expertise and resources to advance health care quality.*

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