LLS UPCOMING PROGRAM News

someday is today
LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY®
fighting blood cancers

Find out more about Updates on Myeloma

Thursday November 7, 2013

Meet our guest speaker **Asher Chanan-Khan, MD**

Myeloma Expert Shares a Hopeful Message

"Now is the best time to encourage patients to learn about myeloma,"

explains **Asher A. Chanan-Khan, MD from the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida.** "The information patients learn can provide enormous hope and encouragement. The most important message is that myeloma patients can expect to enjoy their life today and for years to come." Dr. Chanan-Khan will share this hopeful message with patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals during The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's (LLS) upcoming telephone/web education program.

Dr. Chanan-Khan describes extraordinary progress in myeloma over the last 20 years. "When we started to understand the biological processes that allow myeloma cells to survive and grow, we were able to develop therapies to target those processes. We have gone from having very few options and treating patients with supportive care measures in the early 1990s, to today, where in addition to autologous stem cell transplant, we have more than 20 different combinations of drug therapy that are effective against myeloma. We have also found that we can get better results with much less toxic therapies. Today, when a new patient sits in front of me, I can very comfortably say, you have a nearly 100% chance of responding to this therapy. That's a very different conversation than the conversations I had with patients just 15 to 20 years ago."

Because advances are happening at such a rapid pace, Dr. Chanan-Khan stresses the importance of patients seeking out information from their physicians, and from reliable sources like LLS. "Whether you are someone who wants to know every detail of your disease and treatment, or someone who would prefer to have a physician whom you trust guide you through it, it is important to be your own advocate and be informed about your options. It is also more important than ever for patients to communicate with their healthcare team how they are feeling, because there are so many options available to treat the disease and manage the side effects." Dr. Chanan-Khan explains that personalized therapy is key to improving patient outcomes and quality of life. "We now have the luxury of individualizing treatment. We look at a patient's lifestyle, their profession, their overall health, and the genomics of their disease before deciding on a treatment regimen." For these reasons, Dr. Chanan-Khan also encourages patients to have a myeloma expert involved in their care. "With so many options available, it's important to have myeloma experts strategizing with local oncologists to determine which combinations of therapies should be used with which patients," he explains.

"The story of myeloma drug development is a great one. The progress we have made has been extraordinary. But we won't be satisfied until we have a cure. When we have a cure, this will be a fantastic story," says Dr. Chanan-Khan.

REGISTER NOW

for the FREE telephone/web education program

Myeloma

Update on Treatment and Side Effects Management

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm	**Eastern Time**
12:00 pm to 1:30 pm	**Central Time**
11:00 am to 12:30 pm	**Mountain Time**
10:00 am to 11:30 am	**Pacific Time**

There are a few ways to register:

1 **www.LLS.org/programs**

2 **(866) 992-9950 ext. 304**

Ask Dr. Chanan-Khan a question during the Q&A session

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Additional support

LLS has Information Specialists who are available to talk with you Monday through Friday between 9AM and 6PM ET. Just call **(800) 955-4572** or email **infocenter@LLS.org**.

Support Groups and Peer to Peer Support connect patients and families with others who have been touched by a blood cancer.
Visit www.LLS.org/supportgroups.

Myeloma Chat offers an online forum for open discussion with other myeloma patients and is facilitated by an oncology social worker. The chat is held every Tuesday evening.
Visit www.LLS.org/chat.

Visit www.LLS.org/myelomaeducation to access virtual lectures, transcripts, program slides, audio replays from past myeloma programs and free education materials.

Visit www.LLS.org/finances for financial information and assistance.

The survival rate for myeloma more than tripled since the 1960s.

CANCER EXPERIENCE REGISTRY

Share your experience to help change the future of cancer care. Join the Cancer Experience Registry at **CancerExperienceRegistry.org** or **888-793-9355**.

Survival story: Becky Michels

Inspiring LLS Volunteer Gains Strength From Helping Others

"Fighting cancer is a marathon not a sprint." These are the words printed on the front of a shirt Becky Michels designed to raise funds for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's (LLS) Light The Night® Walk. On the back she printed, "Chemo is not for sissies!" Becky brings that positive attitude and fighting spirit to everything she does, whether it's encouraging other patients receiving chemotherapy, being a cheerleader for her LLS Team In Training®, or speaking by phone with someone newly diagnosed with myeloma through the LLS *Patti Robinson Kaufmann First Connection Program*.

Becky, a nurse practitioner, was diagnosed with myeloma in 2008. She explains that at the time, she didn't know a lot about blood cancers. "I did research on my own, but that can be dangerous. The first medical textbook I read told me I had two years to live. After I got over the shock of the diagnosis, I decided I had to figure out how I was going to live with this." One of her first steps was getting a second opinion. "I wanted to be evaluated by a doctor who was seeing patients with myeloma every day." It was her doctors at MD Anderson Cancer Center who first told her about LLS. And over the last five years, through two stem cell transplants, two clinical trials and several different drug therapy regimens, Becky says she has gained strength from the support she has received from LLS. "I believe I am alive because of LLS. The money LLS provides for research has led to treatments I have benefitted from and the support I have received from staff and volunteers has been priceless." Since 2008, Becky has made it her mission to give back. She has inspired and encouraged countless patients, participated in several Light The Night Walks, completed a half-marathon as part of Team In Training, become a strong advocate for patient education and raised thousands of dollars and volunteered hundreds of hours of her time for LLS. Nicole Bell, LLS Region Mission Director, explains, "Volunteers like Becky allow us to see our mission in action. It's amazing to be able to work so closely with survivors who want to give back to this organization they feel so strongly about."

> "**The money LLS provides for research** has led to treatments I have benefitted from."

Becky describes her involvement with Team In Training as one of her biggest sources of support and strength. "Following my second stem cell transplant, I was using a walker to get around. I started doing physical therapy and yoga and then I got this bright idea that I wanted to do Team In Training. Last fall, while I was in remission, I signed up for the HERO-THON half-marathon in San Antonio. I began training, raising money, and having a great time. I believe that is why I'm here today. On January 27, 2013, I completed my first half-marathon." In April Becky came out of remission, but she still gains strength from her experience. "When I have a bad day at chemo, I look at the 13.1 sticker on the back of my car and I think, 'I did that, I can do this.' It's my miracle cure." Although Becky is not able to train with her team this season, she cheers them on at training runs and reminds them why they are training. She describes her LLS team like a second family. "I am very independent. I'm not one to ask for help. So members of my team just show up at my chemotherapy appointments to keep me company." Her team honored her with a surprise at an early morning training session about a month ago. They revealed that they were naming their team "Team Becky" in her honor and were committed to raising $100,000 for a research grant in her name. As of last week her 50-member team had exceeded their goal.

"People often say, 'your health is everything.' I have learned that what is really most important is having friends and family around you–whether your health is good or bad." Becky's advice to others, "Surround yourself with people who inspire you and who love you. Listen to your body, take time to cry when you need to, reach out to LLS for support and information and know that you can get strength from helping others."