Meet Your Care Team

MEET OUR ONCOLOGY CARE TEAM

Chief of Oncology: Shafqat Akhtar, MD

After graduating from medical school and completing an Internal Medicine residency on the East Coast, I joined the Oncology fellowship training program at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles, California. During my fellowship training, I did a rotation at one of the Kaiser Permanente facilities and was struck with the beauty and benefits of an integrated health care system. The system worked seamlessly. This rotation also afforded me the opportunity to get to know the Kaiser Permanente physicians and see how satisfied they were with their career choice. I was especially impressed with the liberty with which these physicians operated, without interference from administrators and other insurance regulators. It was therefore so easy to make decisions in the best interest of Kaiser Permanente members, unshackled by other influences.

Kaiser Permanente became a natural choice for me and after completing the fellowship, I joined The Permanente Medical Group. I have been at the Santa Rosa facility since 1999 and have been Chief of Oncology since 2001. Our department is staffed with able and compassionate staff members who place the interest of our members above anything else. I am happy to be part of the team and consider it a privilege to work alongside such a dedicated group of people.

Nicolaj Andersen, MD

I chose oncology as a subspecialty because I find working with cancer patients very interesting. The work requires building relationships with patients, which I enjoy. I strive to give cancer patients the reassurance and support they need in their situation. Significant breakthroughs have been made in both hematology and oncology over time, and this progress will no doubt continue. These breakthroughs have offered some cures, some better quality of life, increased survival, and not least of all, hope. But much work remains to be done. My practice philosophy is to be personal, informal, honest and compassionate. I try to be reassuring and consider the whole person's well-being. I believe it is extremely important to be responsive, so I am disciplined about following up with patients. I strive to provide excellent care, a listening ear, and an emotionally stable source of support and advice in what might prove to be difficult times for patients.

I grew up in Hundested, Denmark, a small town on the northwest coast of Sjaelland, Denmark's largest island. My father was a family physician in town and my mother a dentist. This exposure to medicine, while I was growing up, sparked my first interest in becoming a doctor. I moved to Copenhagen (Denmark's largest city) in 1990 to attend university and pursue becoming a medical doctor. After finishing my training at the University of Copenhagen's School of Medicine in 1997, I traveled to Indonesia for a vacation and met my wife, who is American and was living in San Francisco at the time. This was what first brought me to spend time in California. After a couple of years living in Copenhagen, we decided to move back to the U.S. I completed a three-year residency in Internal Medicine at Westchester Medical Center in New York and became increasingly interested in working with cancer patients. I thus decided to subspecialize in Hematology and Oncology and took a position as a fellow at Yale University for an additional three years.

I began to work with Kaiser Permanente in August 2005 and have gained valuable experience in clinical oncology since I joined. I enjoy reading about the latest news and developments in the field and I still have strong ties to

the hematology/oncology faculty members at Yale. I endeavor to be on the front edge of developments in my field. I chose to work at Kaiser Permanente because they have achieved an environment where both patients and doctors can more easily focus on patient care. Kaiser Permanente is a tightly-knit community of doctors in a multi-specialty practice, so there is excellent communication across specialties. This enables the patient to enjoy a continuity of care. Kaiser Permanente is also structured so that the patient comes first. For instance, there are no financial incentives that favor specific treatments at Kaiser Permanente. Therefore, the physician has the freedom to choose the treatment that is best for the patient. Furthermore, I do not find my energies diverted into other things at Kaiser Permanente, such as administrative work. When I go to work, I know I can focus on what I love to do: help patients.

Christine Kaiser, MD

I feel fortunate to be able to care for patients with cancer to help them through an inevitably challenging time in their lives. It is a privilege to be able to participate in continuing clinical research through Kaiser Permanente in hopes of improving care for all patients. I find it extremely rewarding to be involved in this constantly changing field of medicine at a truly exciting time when advances in cancer research are leading to a personalized approach for each patient as well as improved outcomes with longer survival and better quality of life.

I grew up in the Midwest and attended medical school at the University of Minnesota. I then completed a combined residency in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I worked as a primary care physician in Seattle before moving back to the east coast for my fellowship training in hematology and medical oncology at Georgetown University/Washington Hospital Center. I had the opportunity to care for patients with a variety of malignancies at Washington, D.C.'s largest hospital in addition to spending time at both Georgetown University Hospital and the National Institutes of Health. I also served as the chief fellow of my fellowship program. I was then able to relocate to Northern California to join Kaiser Permanente in 2010. I am excited to be part of a group of high-quality physicians in an organization that has a goal of always improving the quality of health care for its members and their families.

I am particularly interested in the treatment of solid tumors but am also trained and board certified in Hematology. In order to provide the most up-to-date care for my patients, I follow medical journals focusing on medical oncology and hematology as well as national meetings for the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the American Society of Hematology.

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Jeffrey Ye, MD

I came to Northern California from New York City, where I lived for more than two decades since I came to the United States. After finishing medical school in China, I came to America to pursue graduate studies in molecular biology. I was trained at the New York University School of Medicine and obtained a Ph.D. in molecular pharmacology. I then obtained post-doctoral fellowships to study at the National Institutes of Health (Bethesda, MD), and at the Rockefeller University (New York, NY), under the mentorship of a Nobel Laureate Dr. David Baltimore. Subsequently, I did an internal medicine residency at the New York University School of Medicine, and medical oncology/hematology fellowship at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. After training, I worked for four years as a breast cancer attending physician at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, while working in the laboratory at the Rockefeller University as an adjunct faculty member. I joined Kaiser Permanente in 2005 to pursue a full-time clinical practice.

Cancer medicine attracted me because I could directly apply my research training to patient care. In the past decade, the advance in molecular biology has completely changed the way we treat malignancies. New drugs and tools are coming from laboratories to the bedside with lightning speed. This makes it an exciting period for both Oncologists and, more importantly, for our patients, who are benefiting directly from the rapid progress in basic research. For cancer patients, we are providing treatments that were unimaginable even just five years ago.

As an oncologist, I am often asked on airplanes or at cocktail parties why I choose this specialty. People are afraid of cancer; therefore, they often have a hard time understanding why some would choose to work in this field. Although I do not always provide a direct answer, deep in my heart I know the reason: the patients. It is the patients that give us inspiration. The patients provide a reason for us to come to work every morning. We help cancer patients every day to obtain a cure for this potentially lethal disease. When a cure is not possible for the patient, we do our best to prolong their lives and provide them with the best quality of life possible with the most compassion that we can. By prolonging life, we give our patients a chance to benefit from the therapies that are on the horizon. I am proud of what we do. Our nurses, pharmacists, the supporting staff, and the doctors, working as a team, provide a high quality of care to the cancer patients in Santa Rosa and the neighboring communities.

Ying Maggie Zeng, MD

I developed my strong interest in Oncology when I was going through residency training. In the past decade, the advances in molecular biology have completely changed the way we treat malignancies. It is exciting to see patients with advanced cancers benefit tremendously from new drugs and technologies. Being an Oncologist, I am privileged to witness some of the exciting moments with the patients.

I choose to work with Kaiser Permanente because I like to work within an integrated medical system where a health care provider can more easily focus on patient care. More importantly, there are excellent communication and great collegiality across specialties.

I worked with Geisinger Health System in Pennsylvania for four years prior to taking the oncology position at Kaiser Permanente. That is a large health care system, similar to Kaiser Permanente, where I gained valuable experience in medical oncology especially in gastrointestinal malignancies by working closely with the colorectal surgeons and surgical oncologists.

I enjoy having the strong bond with my patients which is based on trust built over time. I believe oncology care should be informative, honest, personal and compassionate. Our goal is to cure the patient of cancer if we are able to, if not, the goal should be prolonging people's lives and minimizing the pain and suffering. Ultimately, I believe my role is to help patients to go through those difficult moments with their family members.

Fan Zhang, MD

As a general oncologist/hematologist, I treat all kinds of cancer diseases. I have close contact with academic cancer centers such as MD Anderson Cancer Center, Stanford University, UCSF and other resources.

After growing up in Southern China, I finished my medical training in Sun Yat Sen University of Medical Sciences, after which I became a Cardiologist for 5 years. In 1991, I entered University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) for my doctorate training in Immunology. Soon I turned my interest to Cancer research,

working with Dr. George P. Studzinski, a well-known physician-scientist who, also like a father, led me to the success of my career. After my Residency in Long Island, New York, I continued my Oncology/Hematology fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

MDACC has been acclaimed as a leading cancer center in the United States, with its outstanding performance in cancer research, treatment, and patient care. It has its own 600-bed pure cancer inpatient hospital that provides trainees extensive opportunity to learn about all kinds of cancers, including some extremely rare types of cancer diseases. I was able to work in a large, unique cancer critical care unit as an inpatient physician. I also gained extensive outpatient experience through the center clinic and from LBJ hospital. I felt the institute provided tremendous research and academic resources to fellows.

I built my interest in Oncology/Hematology during my research life in Cancer biology and became an oncologist. After my fellowship, I chose to be a practicing oncologist instead of academic faculty. I feel more valuable to deliver direct patients care especially with my previous cancer research background. In 2003, I joined Kaiser Permanente as a specialist in Medical Oncology and Hematology.

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Oncology Patient Navigator: Carrie Girvin, RN, OCN, ONN

My greatest passions are my family and my patients. I love every part of my job and I am committed to walking with patients on their journey, wherever that path may lead.

I have been in the field of medicine and have worked in Oncology almost two decades. I give a newly diagnosed cancer patient my continuous support and resources through treatment. At home, I enjoy baking bread, gardening, and biking and hiking with my two children and husband.

Oncology Social Worker: Zoe Koehler, MSW

Oncology Social Workers help patients and families deal with the experience of facing cancer. I can help you address practical needs like insurance coverage, financial assistance, and transportation by providing information and referrals to resources available within Kaiser Permanente and in the community. I can also offer support for more complex concerns such as adjusting to an illness, making treatment decisions, navigating cultural and spiritual issues, and talking with family members, children, friends, and even healthcare providers about cancer.

I'm available to meet with patients and family members, together or individually, to provide emotional support. I'm a resource to you throughout the continuum of your care, from discussing strategies to cope with anxiety, leading support groups, advocating for you, and helping navigate transitions in care.

I obtained a Master of Social Work degree from UCLA in 2013. Prior to this position, I have worked in hospice and palliative care. Getting to work with people facing illness is a great gift to me, as I continually learn so much from my patients. I've recently moved to this area from San Francisco to be closer to the redwoods. I enjoy walking in nature and reading short stories or non-fiction with a cup of hot tea in hand. I love this work and I look forward to meeting with you.

Supportive Care Services: Carla Fracchia, MD

I belong to the skilled nursing facility group of physicians and provide care to a variety of adult patients. I enjoy the diversity of this patient population and addressing the multitude of needs of our patients and their families.

I joined Kaiser Permanente, Southern California after my fellowship in Palliative Medicine in 2006. I moved to Kaiser Permanente Northern California in 2010. I continue to work for the organization because I believe in their mission to provide high-quality care to our members. I am a board-certified internist and received additional training in Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine. These three specialties are closely associated and enable me to take a comprehensive view of patient concerns and issues. With your help, I will attempt to provide the best care for you and your family and help you navigate our medical system.

Supportive Care Services: Grace Wu, MD

I have always been drawn to people's stories for as long as I can remember. This has remained true throughout my Internal Medicine Residency, Geriatric and Palliative Medicine Fellowships and time as a Hospitalist.

Now as a Palliative Care Specialist, I work with a robust team to get to know our patients and their stories as well as possible. In the midst of serious illness, there is often much to talk about. On one hand, I am curious to learn about people's recent stories - what conversations they've been having with their medical team, how things have been going at home, and what symptoms or stresses of serious illness we can help address. On the other hand, I am equally curious to learn about people's earlier stories, too - past experiences that helped shape who they are today, who their important people are, and more.

Getting to know our patients and their loved ones on a deeper, "whole person" level is an honor and a joy. It also helps us make sure that our patients are receiving the best care possible, while always keeping quality of life as a top priority. Nowadays, medical care is often so specialized that the same treatment might be the right fit for one person but not necessarily for another person. Our goal is to make sure all of our patients are receiving highly personalized care at all times - whatever our patients tell us feels right for them is what we help advocate for. And of course the better we know our patients, the better we can also help plan for future stories, as well.

It is a great privilege to be here at Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa and back in the Bay Area where I grew up. I am surrounded by outstanding colleagues who care deeply about the work they do, and I truly believe that Kaiser Permanente's integrated system makes for better patient care.

Supportive Care Services: Yve Duran, MSW

I graduated from Lewis and Clark College and received a Masters in Social Work from Portland State University. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and have an Advanced Certification in Hospice and Palliative Care-Social Work. I began my social work career providing community mental health services to children and families in Portland, Oregon. After my mother's diagnosis of stage IV cancer, I decided to move back to Sonoma County to be closer to family and help care for her. I began working as a medical social worker at a local trauma center in Santa Rosa. I quickly fell in love with hospital social work due to the diversity of patients, working within a multi-disciplinary team, and being able to provide resources to help support people's health and wellness.

After nearly a decade as a hospital social worker, I came to Kaiser Permanente in 2010 to work with adults with chronic illness. Since that time, I have been an active member of the Bio-Ethics Committee and I currently co-facilitate our Family and Caregiver Support Group. My work evolved to include advance care planning conversations and helping grow our Life Care Planning program. This work provided a natural transition into palliative care and I officially joined the Outpatient Palliative Care team in 2015. My goal is to be a support and resource as well as ease the impact of illness on patients and their families. I feel privileged to be able to share a tender space with patients and families who are going through some of their most difficult and critical times. I am

fortunate to have the career of my dreams, and the pleasure of being a palliative care social worker with a fantastic team. I feel grateful to come to work each day with a team of smart, dedicated, and caring individuals who share the same vision and approach to patient and family centered care.

Supportive Care Services: Brian Griffiths, MSW, MPH

I was drawn to social work after experiencing the tragedies losses of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the early 1990s and witnessing the fine work of the social workers who help people with AIDS live and die dignity and respect.

I studied at U.C Berkeley and received my dual Masters in Social Work and Public Health. My focus in my studies was on health policy and management, but I quickly learned after graduating that my real talents lie in direct patient care. After nearly a decade as a medical social worker at the Sonoma County HIV Clinic, I came to Kaiser where my focus expanded to all patients with suffering illness. I spent several years working as a hospital social worker before joining the Outpatient Palliative Care team in 2015.

My hope work is to ease suffering by providing patients and families with the support and resources they need to navigate their illness journey, and to accompany them on their path so they know they are not alone. I am to go to work with the team of professionals who cared deeply about providing quality care that considers the whole person.

I lived with my husband Pete and our menagerie of animals in the Hills to the west of Healdsbburg, with our many dogs, chickens and our very special llama named Dali. Also a proud member of the Russian River Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, where I am known by the name Sister Frances A. Sissy. I'm a native of Sonoma County and enjoy a weekly dinners with my parents in Graton, where I grew up.

Oncology Nutritional Services: Christina Fifer, MS, RD, CSO

Working with patients is a passion of mine. I enjoy meeting people and learning what their nutrition needs are. In working with me, we will come up with a nutrition plan together to contribute towards your health goals, whether that be prevention, delay, and/or management of diseases and/or conditions.

I have been happily employed as a Registered Dietician with Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa since 1999. My formal training started with a Bachelor of Science degree in Food and Nutrition from San Diego State University in 1995. I then completed my dietetic internship at Patton State Hospital in San Bernardino County, CA, and passed the registration exam for dieticians in 1996. In 2004, I completed my Masters of Science degree in Human Nutrition at the University Of New Haven, CT via a satellite campus in San Francisco. In 2013 I became Board Certified in Oncology Nutrition. I assist patients in all stages of cancer, including prevention, nutrition during treatment, and in survivorship. Eating the right kinds of food during and after treatment can help one feel better and stay stronger. I look forward to meeting you!

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Oncology Nursing Staff

Registered Nurses who staff the Oncology Department are dedicated to caring for you in all stages of cancer. The scope of oncology nursing spans from prevention to early detection to treatment, through symptom management and palliative care. Oncology nurses often serve as your first line of communication and help coordinate the many aspects of your care throughout cancer treatment.

All our nurses are chemotherapy and biotherapy certified and many are Oncology certified, which requires rigorous study and examination through the Oncology Nursing Society. Their collective goal is a high quality of life for all patients and their loved ones.

Oncology Medical Assistants

The Oncology Medical Assistants (MA) are always striving to improve our patients' treatment experience. They may be your first contact at a visit or assist in connecting you with the resources you need during your treatment. Our MA team works with the entire department to determine and deliver the ideal treatment for each patient.

Oncology Clinical Trials Department

At any one time, there are usually more than 30 cancer trials available for Kaiser Permanente patients within our Oncology Clinical Trials Program. Every year, more than 300 Kaiser Permanente patients in Northern California will enroll in an oncology trial, where they may be able to participate in new cancer treatments even before they are FDA approved and available to the general medical community.

95% of the clinical trials offered at Kaiser Permanente are multi-center trials being conducted at university medical school centers and other cancer treatment research centers across the United States. Kaiser Permanente participates in national trials through several national cooperative research groups and with pharmaceutical companies.

Choosing to participate in a clinical trial is an important, personal decision. It is often helpful to talk to a physician, family members, and friend about deciding to join a trial. The Clinical Trials Department in Santa Rosa consists of a Registered Nurse and a Data Manager who work closely with your physician and the rest of the Oncology team to coordinate your treatment options.

Pharmacy Services

The Oncology Pharmacists at Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa are fully integrated members of your chemotherapy care team. The pharmacists work very closely with your physician, nurses, and social services team to ensure safe and appropriate drug therapy. Pharmacists assist in chemotherapy plan development, especially in IV chemotherapy design, oral chemotherapy teaching, and supportive care issues such as anti-nausea medication. The pharmacists also provide ongoing drug dosage safety checks in accordance with weight parameters, lab work, and interacting medication. Finally, our pharmacists work with staff in assisting with ongoing symptom management issues.

MY HEALTH CARE TEAM

Primary Care Doctor: Contact Information:	**OTHER SPECIALISTS:**
Medical Oncologist: Contact Information:	**Name:** **Specialty:** Contact Information:
Radiation Oncologist: Contact Information:	**Name:** **Specialty:** Contact Information:
Surgeon: Contact Information:	**Name:** **Specialty:** Contact Information:
Oncology Nurse: Contact Information:	**Name:** **Specialty:** Contact Information:

MY HEALTH CARE TEAM

Oncology Social Worker:	**Name:**
Contact Information:	**Specialty:**
	Contact Information: