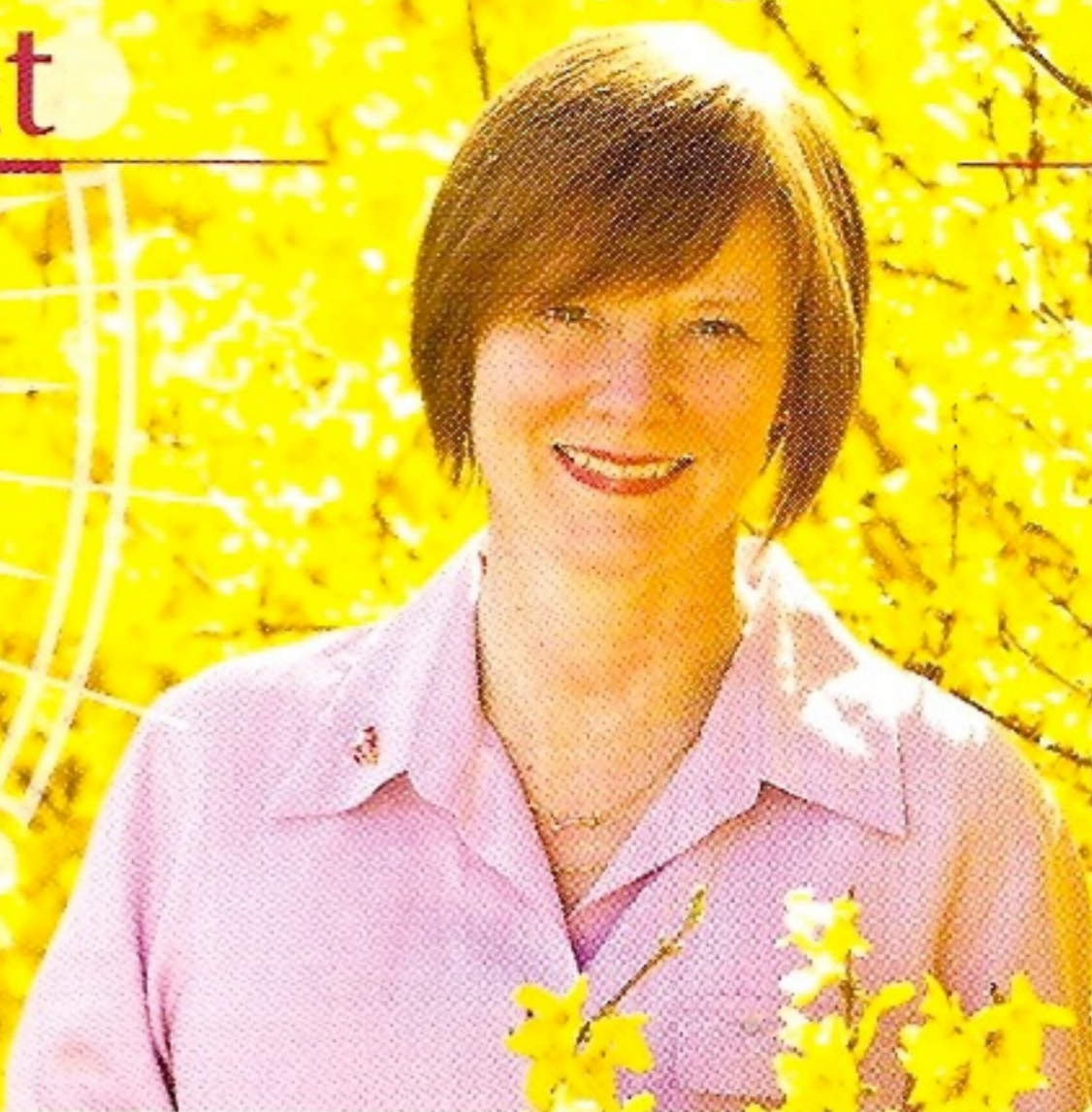


Breast Health Navigators Help Guide Patients Through Cancer Treatment



When Marianne Marcus of Monroe Township was diagnosed with breast cancer two years ago, she was not sure about the best way to proceed with her treatment and needed someone to help address her questions and anxiety. She found the support she was looking for in Beth Krefski, RN, BSN, her nurse navigator at University Medical Center at Princeton's Breast Health Center in East Windsor.

"Beth was just so attuned to what I was going through," Marcus says. "She pointed me in the right direction and gave me the guidance I needed to move forward with my care."

Krefski, who is also Administrative Director of UMCP's Breast Health Center, says patient navigators are increasingly being called upon to help patients chart a course through their medical care.

"They complement what we're doing," explains Rachel P. Dultz, MD, FACS, board certified surgeon and Medical Director of UMCP's Breast Health Center, who treated Marcus. "Our goal is to guide patients through this complicated process as smoothly as possible."

Typically assigned as soon as patients receive an abnormal mammogram, navigators stay with patients throughout their treatment. Under the direction of BHC's primary Breast Health Navigator Mary Kiensicki, navigators provide vital emotional support and help direct patients to important resources and information.

For instance, patients with cancer might wonder how to break the news to family, prepare for a meeting with a specialist, find a wig, or connect with a support group. Navigators provide the answers in a manner one patient describes as "the perfect combination of empathy and professionalism."

***"Everybody at the Breast Health Center was so helpful and made my journey so much easier than I could have navigated on my own."
Donna Briskey
Bridgewater, NJ***

This support can be invaluable. Throughout treatment, Krefski reassured Marcus and let her know she wasn't alone. She adds, "If I had a problem today, I would call Beth immediately."

Her sentiment is echoed by Donna Briskey of Bridgewater who was 48 when diagnosed with breast cancer: "Everybody at the Breast Health Center was so helpful and made my journey so

much easier than I could have navigated on my own."

Briskey especially appreciated the continuum of care provided at the state-of-the-art Center and that staff at the Center look outside the physical diagnosis to other patient needs.

Navigators also educate community members about the importance of early detection. It is all part of empowering people to take charge of their health, and then supporting them if they need treatment, Krefski says.

UMCP is a Clinical Research Affiliate of The Cancer Institute of New Jersey and accredited by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer. For more information about UMCP's Breast Health Center, call **1.888.PHCS4YOU (1.888.742.7496)** or visit **www.princetonhcs.org**.

Pictured above: Donna Briskey of Bridgewater says her nurse navigator at UMCP's Breast Health Center put her at ease and made her feel comfortable asking questions about her diagnosis and treatment.