

## For Those Living with Breast Cancer

Getting the news that you or a loved one has breast cancer can be overwhelming and a diagnosis will most likely result in many questions.

According to the American Cancer Society, there are approximately 2.5-million breast cancer survivors living in the U.S. October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month and OAOHN would like to provide some tips for those who have been diagnosed, for survivors and their friends and families.

CancerCare.org offers the following suggestions to help navigate treatment if you or a loved one is diagnosed with breast cancer:

- **Create a team.** Health care professionals and clergy may all play significant roles in your care and healing process. Your family and friends are a crucial part of your health care team as well.
- **Know the roles played by each member of your team.** For example, your oncologist is the member of your team that organizes your treatment plan and may work with an oncology nurse who helps you manage treatment side effects, gives more information about your treatment and schedules your next procedures.
- **Find out what your insurance will cover.** To find out what is covered, use the toll-free number provided by your health insurance carrier. Also, find out who to call in your doctor's office or hospital when your insurance company has a question about your treatment.
- **Be an advocate for yourself.** Make lists of questions before speaking with your medical team and write down their answers. If you like, seek second opinions so that you feel well informed and confident about your choices.
- **Take care of your Spiritual Health.** Consider joining a support group for people with breast cancer. Keep a journal, express your feelings and thoughts artistically and get appropriate exercise.

As you know, having a Primary Care Physician (PCP) who can coordinate your care is vital to your good health. A PCP typically specializes in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine or General Practice. If you don't have a Primary Care Physician, finding one is easy! Just visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the "find a doctor" area and follow the instructions.

When you're being treated for a disease or condition, it may not always be easy to decide where to go for care. For anything that is considered a life-threatening situation (like chest pain or sudden and severe pain) it's best to go to the emergency room. For less severe matters that still require immediate attention, if you can't get in to see your PCP, going to an urgent care facility can save you time and money.

Even if you require emergency or urgent care for your health situation, it's always best to have a relationship with a PCP who knows your history and understands what is happening with your health over time.