



# SUPPORT PROGRAMS

for **CANCER** and for **SICKLE CELL**  
Disorders

Vol. 18 No. 2 Spring 2024 Newsletter/Calendar

## *Sickle Cell notes*

**Y**ou may notice that we have changed our title from “Cancer & Sickle Cell Support Programs” to “Support Programs for Cancer and for Sickle Cell Disorders.” This is to acknowledge that these diseases are distinctly different from one another and not at all linked. I want to thank those who gave recent feedback on this sensitive matter. We should have better considered the wording when we first opened the support programs to those with sickle cell disease. I want to apologize to all who have felt put off by the original title.

We do have some *very exciting* medical news to report: Just a few days prior to this writing, an adult sickle cell patient became the first from BMC to enter the process of gene therapy! This process takes up to six months. After the patient receives a short course of chemotherapy, doctors extract stem cells from the bone marrow. Gene editing techniques are performed in the laboratory on these cells. Then the cells are infused back into the patient for a permanent treatment.

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## *Cancer notes*

**J**ust as on the sickle cell front, we have exciting medical news in cancer treatment: A little over a year ago, a lymphoma patient became BMC’s first ever to receive CAR T-cell therapy. She now reports being ‘back to her normal life.’ CAR T-cell therapy is a type of targeted immunotherapy that can be used when other chemo treatments are not working. The patient’s T cells (a type of white blood cell) are altered in a laboratory so they are able to find and destroy the specific cancer cells.

Another happy note: We are holding the 17th annual *Cancer Survivors Celebration* luncheon—the 2nd since the pandemic—on June 15th. Check the back page for details. Hoping to see every cancer patient there!

*Bob David*, Manager

## Support Groups

Support groups offer a unique opportunity for current patients and short- and long-term survivors alike to get to know others who have had similar disease and treatment experiences as their own. The intention is to maintain a safe space where participants may share details of their experience, ask questions, and offer knowledge and insights that doctors usually cannot provide. True support, encouragement, and uplifting energy are the norm.

Sometimes a doctor or specialist is invited to give information on treatments and self-care and to answer questions; but the heart of the group is always patients talking to patients. Generally what is gained in these groups can seldom be found elsewhere.

### *One-to-One Peer Support*

If you would like to speak one-to-one with someone who has had a similar disease and/or treatment experience as you've had, let us know and we will try to find someone who will be happy to speak with you.



### **North Shore LGBTQIA+ Cancer Support Group**

For wherever you are in your journey...  
Sponsored by the  
North Shore LGBTQ+  
Network.



[www.northshorelgbtqnetwork.org](http://www.northshorelgbtqnetwork.org)

*All groups are mostly meeting by ZOOM. If you are newly interested in participating, please let us know and we will provide you with the link info. We can also help you with using ZOOM if necessary.*

- Our support groups are open to all patients/survivors, regardless of when and where they may have been treated.
- Contact our office for more info and to be on the email and text lists for the Zoom link(s) and meeting reminders.
- Family members and friends are welcome to the cancer support groups (though men only to the men's groups, women only to the women's groups). The Sickle Cell Disease support group is exclusively for adult patients.

### *Caregiver Support Group*



The role of caregiver to a cancer or sickle cell patient can be very challenging and stressful. You may feel no one understands or appreciates the weight you are carrying. One of the best things you can do for yourself is to talk with others who are experiencing the same thing. Only caregivers are allowed to participate in this group.

Groups meet **monthly** unless otherwise noted.

NAME	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
<b>Cancer by Type</b>			
BLOOD	2nd Wed.	1-3p	ZOOM
BREAST	2nd Tues.	5-7p	
GASTROINTESTINAL (GI)	1st Fri.	12-2p	
LUNG	2nd Thurs.	1-3p	
PROSTATE	1st Tues.	5-7p	
HEAD & NECK	2nd Thurs.	6-8p	
<b>Cancer by Population Group</b>			
MEN (any cancer)	Last Mon.	12-2p	ZOOM
WOMEN (any cancer)	Last Mon.	2:30-4p	
HAITIAN CREOLE-speaking	4th Thurs.	5-7p	
SPANISH-speaking	Last Tues.	7-9p	
YOUNG ADULTS (ages 18-39)	1st & 3rd Wed.	5:30-7p	For info, email yap@dfci.harvard.edu
<b>Sickle Cell &amp; other diseases</b>			
SICKLE CELL DISEASE	1st Thurs.	6-8p	ZOOM
SARCOIDOSIS <i>(Not shown on calendar. For info, call Melissa at 617-834-4123 or Sharon at 857-492-7616.)</i>	3rd Thurs.	6:30-8p	
AMYLOIDOSIS <i>(Not shown on calendar)</i>	1st Thurs.	1-3p	
<b>Additional Support</b>			
OSTOMY colostomy/ileostomy/urostomy For info or help, contact Jocelyn at 781-228-9509	3rd Wed.	6:30-8p	Teleconference
CAREGIVERS	4th Thurs.	10-11:30a	ZOOM
BEREAVEMENT For those who have lost a loved one to cancer, sickle cell disease, or other serious illness. Meeting by ZOOM video conference. Call 617-638-7540 for info.			

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

SG = Support Group CSG = Cancer Support Group

Most regularly occurring support groups and activities are being held by ZOOM.

For locations for feature programs, check back page. Call 617-414-5726 to confirm schedule.

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1 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	2 Prostate CSG 5-7p	3 BEAM 6-7:30p	4 Sickle Cell SG 6-8p <i>[no Chair Yoga]</i>	5 GI CSG 12-2p
8 Observer Mind 5-6:30p	9 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast CSG 5-7p	10 Blood CSG 1-3p BEAM 6-7:30p	11 Lung CSG 1-3p <i>[no Chair Yoga]</i> Head/Neck CSG 6-8p	12
15 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	16 Arts & Crafts 6-8p	17 BEAM 6-7:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	18 Chair Yoga 5-6p	19
	23	24 BEAM 6-7:30p	25 C'giver SG 10-11:30a <b>MFA Tour</b> 10:30a-12p Chair Yoga 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	26
29 Men's CSG 12-2p Women's CSG 2:30-4p Observer Mind 5-6:30p	30 Spanish CSG 7-9p	1 BEAM 6-7:30p	2 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	3 GI CSG 12-2p
6 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	7 Prostate CSG 5-7p	8 Blood CSG 1-3p BEAM 6-7:30p	9 Lung CSG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck CSG 6-8p	10 <b>Museum of Fine Arts Virtual Tour</b> 2-4p
13 Observer Mind 5-6:30p	14 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast CSG 5-7p	15 BEAM 6-7:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	16 Chair Yoga 5-6p	17 <b>Recipe Swap/Potluck</b> 6-8p
20 Men's CSG 12-2p Women's CSG 2:30-4p Intentional Wellness 6-7p	21 Arts & Crafts 6-8p	22 BEAM 6-7:30p	23 Caregiver SG 10-11:30a Chair Yoga 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	24
27 Memorial Day (clinics closed) <i>[Observer Mind &gt; 5/28]</i>	28 Observer Mind 5-6:30p Spanish CSG 7-9p	29 BEAM 6-7:30p	30 Chair Yoga 5-6p	31
3 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	4 Prostate CSG 5-7p	5 BEAM 6-7:30p	6 Chair Yoga 5-6p Sickle Cell SG 6-8p	7 GI CSG 12-2p
10 Observer Mind 5-6:30p	11 Cooking 2:30-3:30p Breast CSG 5-7p	12 Blood CSG 1-3p BEAM 6-7:30p	13 Lung CSG 1-3p Chair Yoga 5-6p Head/Neck CSG 6-8p	14 15 (Saturday) <b>Cancer Survivors Celebration</b> 11a-1:30p
17 Intentional Wellness 6-7p	18 Arts & Crafts 6-8p	19 BEAM 6-7:30p Ostomy SG 6:30-8p	20 Chair Yoga 5-6p	21
24 Men's CSG 12-2p Women's CSG 2:30-4p Observer Mind 5-6:30p	25 Spanish CSG 7-9p	26 BEAM 6-7:30p	27 Caregiver SG 10-11:30a Chair Yoga 5-6p Haitian CSG 5-7p	28 29 (Saturday) <b>Body/Mind Sampler</b> 11a-2p

## Support Activities

Our ongoing activity groups speak to the interests of many. People get to know one another in the context of skill-building and body/mind activities. Family members and friends are welcome to participate.

*Most groups are meeting by ZOOM. If you are newly interested in participating, please let us know and we will provide you with the link info.*

Contact our office for more info and to be on the email and text lists for Zoom links and reminders.



NAME	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
<b>Mind and Body</b>			
OBSERVER MIND Learning & practicing how to be mindful	2nd & last Mon.	5-6:30p	ZOOM
INTENTIONAL WELLNESS — <i>BREATH, SOUND &amp; MOTION</i> Physical healing and emotional balance through simple qigong & yoga exercises	1st & 3rd Mon.	6-7p	ZOOM
BEAM <i>BODY • ENERGY • AWARENESS • MOVEMENT</i> Loosening up, tension-release, balance, body awareness, unifying of energy	Wednesdays	6-7:30p	
CHAIR YOGA Seated exercises for body, breath, mind	Thursdays	5-6p	
<b>Handiwork</b>			
ARTS & CRAFTS Fun, simple projects. All materials provided.	3rd Tues.	6-8p	Moakley Lower Level (basement)
<b>Diet and Nutrition</b>			
COOKING CLASSES for cancer & sickle cell patients  Go to <a href="http://www.bmc.org/cookingclasses">www.bmc.org/cookingclasses</a> for information on other BMC Teaching Kitchen programs and classes.	2nd Tues.	2:30-3:30p	ZOOM

## Activity Descriptions

### OBSERVER MIND

~ Bob David

Short meditations, reflection, and discussion to help us observe our thoughts and feelings. Through this practice, we aim to increase our awareness, become less controlled by our thoughts and feelings, and become more able to see things clearly.

### INTENTIONAL WELLNESS

— *BREATH, SOUND & MOTION*

~ Lynne Bolen

Easy, meditative Qigong and Dao Yoga movements and techniques that incorporate breathwork, vocalizations, and visualizations to support overall health, healing, and longevity. They reduce stress and anxiety, enhance blood circulation, increase energy, and improve overall emotional balance.

### BEAM (BODY • ENERGY •

AWARENESS • MOVEMENT)

~ Bob David

A blend of exercise, Tai Chi, dance, and meditation, helpful for most all conditions. Set to a variety of selected music, the activities are designed to:

- *loosen, stretch, and strengthen*
- *improve coordination and balance*
- *release body tension & unify energy throughout the body*

The overall goal is greater awareness, comfort, and facility with our bodies.

### CHAIR YOGA

~ Colleen Brescia

Yoga exercises while seated to increase strength, flexibility, and mobility and to improve breathing and increase mindfulness.

### ARTS & CRAFTS

~ Cyrena Gasse

Each month, participants learn new, simple craft projects. No experience necessary. All materials provided. Come share some laughs, get busy, and add your own creative touches!

### COOKING

~ BMC Registered Dietitians

From BMC's Teaching Kitchen, registered dietitians demonstrate how to make tasty, easy, healthful dishes. We email the recipe in advance, so you can get the ingredients and cook along! Or simply watch and enjoy. You'll find many helpful tips and techniques.

## Complementary Services

### ACUPUNCTURE CLINIC

Acupuncture is a 2,500-yr-old method to treat pain and many other symptoms. With 40+ years experience, Beth Sommers, PhD, MPH, LAc, offers sessions to BMC adult sickle cell patients and to BMC cancer patients currently or recently in treatment. Thursdays, 9am-12pm, Moakley Bldg, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. To request a free appointment, call or email Bob (see back page).

### American Cancer Society



The American Cancer Society offers free resources to cancer

patients. For information on what is currently available, call the ACS hotline, 800-227-2345 (open 24/7) or go to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). You may also consult with your Patient Navigator.

## Feature Programs

### MUSEUM of FINE ARTS

1. Thursday, April 25, 10:30a-12:00p, in person (*Meet inside Museum Rd. entrance.*)

“Art in Bloom”—In-person group tour of the 48th annual display of works of art paired with floral interpretations created by garden clubs and design professionals.

2. Friday, May 10, 2-4p, by Zoom

Informative virtual tour of selected artwork, led by volunteer guides.

**\*\*Contact us anytime for instructions to obtain FREE PASSES to the Museum.**

### RECIPE SWAP & POTLUCK

Friday, May 17, 6-8p  
Moakely Lower Level

We’re bringing back a fond tradition! Write out a favorite recipe. If you have the time, prepare the dish. Then bring both to share. We discuss the recipes and cooking techniques, have a good time, work up an appetite, and then eat! Don’t miss this multicultural treat. You are welcome to participate regardless of what you can or cannot bring.

### PAINTING WORKSHOP

Date/Time tbd, Moakley Green (outdoors)

Jonathan “the Painter” provides the materials and the inspiration! No experience needed.



### BMC's 17th Annual Cancer Survivors Celebration!

Saturday, June 15, 11:00a-1:30p  
Shapiro Bldg Lobby

If you have ever been diagnosed with cancer, you are a cancer survivor!

This is a celebration for you and your loved ones. There will be short VIP speeches, live music, lunch, photos, games, prizes, and more! Join hundreds of other survivors, family, friends, and supporters at this inspiring event!

### BODY/MIND 3-HR SAMPLER

Saturday, June 29, 11a-2p  
Moakley Green (outdoors)

Experience the Intentional Wellness, BEAM, and Chair Yoga classes in person in one day, outdoors. Lunch will be provided. See pg 7 for class descriptions.



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[www.bmc.org/cancer/support-services](http://www.bmc.org/cancer/support-services)