

Pink Aid Grant Awarded to Norwalk Hospital's Whittingham Cancer Center

By Daily Voice Contributor Jay Waitkus
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Norwalk Hospital has received a \$36,032 grant from Pink Aid, a charitable organization that funds breast cancer services for women in need.

The grant enables 30 eligible breast cancer patients to receive cold cap therapy or cold therapy mittens and slippers, treatment not typically covered by insurance.

Studies indicate that cold therapy may reduce some of the most unpleasant side effects of chemotherapy, including hair and nail loss.

Breast cancer patients undergoing a taxane-based chemotherapy regimen wear soft, gel-filled caps that are chilled to a temperature of between minus 30 and minus 32 degrees Celsius in a biomedical freezer.

The cold caps, which are worn before, during and after chemotherapy treatment, cool the scalp so that hair capillaries become temporarily dormant and do not absorb chemotherapeutic drugs.



The Whittingham Cancer Center at Norwalk Hospital. Photo Credit: Courtesy of Whittingham Cancer Center

In 2014, a cold cap therapy pilot program for breast cancer patients was implemented at Norwalk Hospital under the direction Richard Zelkowitz, medical director of the Smilow Breast Health Center and chief of Hematology/Oncology at Norwalk Hospital.

Since then, more than 25 patients have participated in the program, with 80 to 100 percent of patients achieving favorable outcomes in hair preservation, depending on their prescribed chemotherapy drug protocol.

“We are very excited and grateful to receive this Pink Aid grant,” said Mary Heery, breast health specialist at the Whittingham Cancer Center. “Now we will be able to offer cold cap therapy and cold therapy mitts and slippers to underserved patients who are battling breast cancer and meet eligibility guidelines.”

For more information about the Cold Cap Therapy program at Norwalk Hospital, call 203-852-2300.