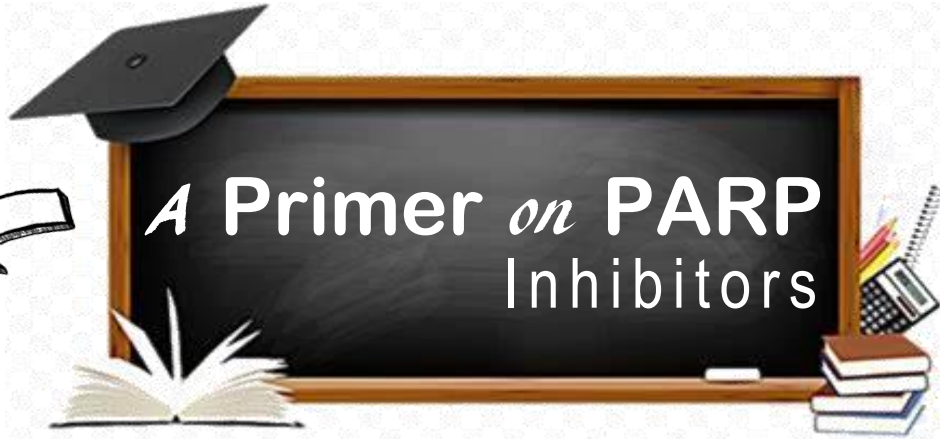




Ovarian Cancer Support Group



What is PARP?

The acronym PARP stands for Poly (ADP-Ribose) Polymerase. It is a protein (and an enzyme) that helps repair damaged DNA in both healthy cells and cancer cells.

Information for this article came primarily from the websites of the National Cancer Institute (www.cancer.gov) and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (www.dana-farber.org)

What are PARP inhibitors?

PARP inhibitors are a type of prescription drug given orally to help treat certain types of cancer and to delay the return of disease.

Which PARP inhibitors are approved for ovarian cancer?

There are currently three in use: **Lynparza** (olaparib), **Zejula** (niraparib) and **Rubraca** (rucaparib). A fourth agent, veliparib, is still in clinical trials. Each PARP inhibitor works basically in the same way, but their side effect profiles may vary.

One to One is devoted to the on-going support of those newly diagnosed, those in remission and those in recurrence.

100% of contributions directly benefit our group by providing activities and paying for expenses.

Donations are gratefully accepted and can be made by check payable to **One to One Ovarian Cancer Support Group** c/o Marilyn Brozovic 4793 Alton Dr. Troy, MI 48085

A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.

How do PARP inhibitors work?

The cells in our body can be thought of as little machines, each with a special function. And, like machines, our cells sometimes suffer damage that interferes with their operation. Injury to cells can occur through environmental hazards like chemicals or radiation, or naturally, just by chance or bad luck. One part of a cell that can be damaged is DNA, which is the genetic material that controls just about everything a cell does. Fortunately, cells have several mechanisms for making repairs. BRCA1 and BRCA2, known as tumor suppressor genes, create proteins that help repair the breaks in the DNA strands. PARP also fixes damaged DNA. This system usually works well together and allows both healthy cells and cancerous cells to survive.



However, in some types of ovarian cancer, where the BRCA gene is faulty, the cancer cells must rely on PARP for repairs. The PARP inhibitors act to stop the cancer cells' DNA being repaired by PARP, so the damaged cells die and the tumor can no longer grow.

Early clinical trials of PARP inhibitors found that they worked best in patients with mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. However, ongoing research has suggested that these agents may also work in tumors with other types of DNA repair defects, including a broad category of defects called homologous recombination deficiency (HRD). In fact, the companion diagnostic test approved with rucaparib tests tumors for BRCA gene mutations and for HRD.

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What are some side effects of the PARP inhibitors?

Treatment with a PARP inhibitor is considered targeted therapy -- it targets cancer cells and has less effect on healthy cells than traditional chemotherapy. However, these agents do affect other cells in the body and therefore can have negative side effects. They can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and the drugs may have an effect on blood cells, resulting in anemia and decreases in both platelets and white blood cells.



Do PARP inhibitors cause hair loss?

Unlike some chemotherapies, the PARP inhibitors generally do not cause hair loss.

Are PARP inhibitors considered immunotherapy?

Because PARP inhibitors strike at cancer cells' DNA-repair machinery and do not directly target the immune system, they are not considered immunotherapies. However, recent research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute indicates that PARP inhibitors may also stimulate the immune system to attack some ovarian cancers. The findings suggest that combining PARP inhibitors with certain immunotherapy agents may extend remissions beyond what PARP inhibitors can achieve alone.

Final thoughts:

Much research is going on to learn how to best incorporate the different PARP inhibitors into treatment strategies for patients with ovarian cancer. Each woman is unique and not all drugs affect each person the same way. Do your homework and consult your own health care team and possibly get a second opinion before making your decision regarding what course of treatment you are going to pursue.



SEPTEMBER 9

Guest speaker: **Sheba Roy, ND FABNO**

"Medical Marijuana and CBD in the Fight Against Cancer"

Dr. Roy is boarded in the interaction between natural therapies, drugs and radiation in a cancer population, and is one of approximately 75 fellows of the American Board of Naturopathic Oncology practicing in the U.S. and Canada.

As a specialist in supportive care in oncology, Dr. Roy co-manages dose-limiting side effects of cancer drugs and radiation and optimizes surgical outcomes using natural therapies that are safe and clinically, evidence-informed. She helps patients lower risk of recurrence in survivorship and prevent late term side effects that can impact quality and length of life.

OCTOBER 14

Guest speaker: **Dr. Julie Fattore, DDS**

"Dental Care During and After Chemotherapy"

Dr. Fattore has been passionate about the field of dentistry for over 30 years. She graduated from U of M School of Dentistry with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Dental Hygiene. Dr. Fattore values her patient relationships, delivering gentle and compassionate care with a high level of doctor accessibility.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, October 30, 10 am – 12 noon

Health and Wellness Program

Presented by Oakland University Doctor of Physical Therapy students.

Oakland University – Rochester MI

(More info to follow)

PROFILE IN

Courage

By Marcia Gurche

It's not often that we repeat a Profile in Courage article, but there are exceptions to every rule, and I think if ever there was an exception to be made it would be for **Marilyn Brozovic**. Back in 2005 we featured Marilyn as part of our "Profile in Courage – Advocates and Heroes" article. Everyone who comes into our *One to One* Support Group meets Marilyn almost immediately, but most don't really get to know her on a personal basis, so it's time to meet the woman who keeps our amazing group running so smoothly.

While Marilyn was one of the founding members of the *One to One* Group, you might be surprised to learn that she was not necessarily one of the initial "leaders." The group was led by a social work intern and our beloved oncology nurse, **Anna Dugan**. At the time of Marilyn's ovarian cancer diagnosis, she was already a two-time breast cancer survivor. She was also a wife and mother and worked at Beaumont, where she had been employed since she graduated from high school. In the beginning, she was content to attend meetings as an ovarian cancer survivor, but it wasn't long before she saw the need for the group to have a newsletter, which she subsequently started. She is the queen of the Excel spreadsheet, so she branched out and became the group's secretary, keeping notes for the group and organizing activities. As a long-time Beaumont employee, she was a natural fit to become the liaison to the Beaumont Administration as well.

Over the years Marilyn has organized numerous activities for our support group. She spends countless hours behind the scenes, making sure each detail is seen to. Some of the activities that Marilyn orchestrates include occasional "fundraisers," bi-monthly meetings, our Girls' Get-Away Weekend, the annual Holiday Party, the past Relay for Life events, and the printing of our many group newsletters and other materials. Marilyn makes sure nothing is left to chance and that every event goes off without a hitch.

In addition to her organizational skills, Marilyn's compassion and understanding of the emotional trauma experienced by a newly diagnosed patient makes her a natural to visit newly diagnosed women in the hospital. She follows up with calls to them and also to any regular group members who aren't doing well, sending endless cards of love and support.

Marilyn can certainly empathize as she heard the traumatic words "You have cancer" three times herself.

Marilyn has been married to **Rick** for 45 years and they are enjoying their retirement years together. Marilyn retired from Beaumont in 2011 and Whitlock Printing in 2017. Rick retired from McNaughton-McKay Electrical in 2008. Through many years of camping with their girls, Marilyn and Rick got to see a lot of the country. Now, however, they spend part of each winter in Florida in a special community called Riverside Golf Club & Marina, where they have made some very special friends. The group of friends has taken trips together and truly enjoy spending time together.

Marilyn loves to be active and she enjoys playing pickleball, line dancing, tap dancing, card games, and participating in the annual talent show, among other things. Just because she is in the land of fun and sun doesn't mean that she has given up organizing, however. She has been known to choreograph a tap dance routine or two for the



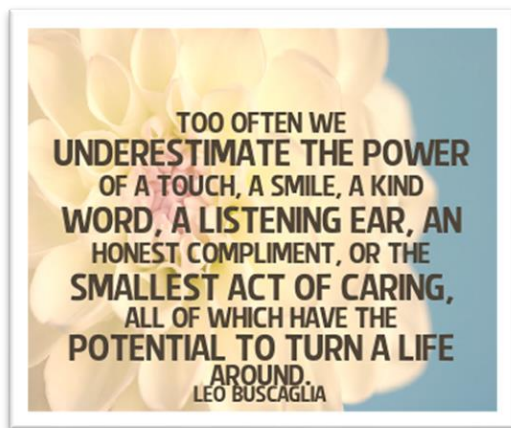
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community talent show, and during Covid she organized a golf cart parade throughout their Riverside neighborhood.

Marilyn and Rick have two daughters and five grandchildren who they love spending time with. **Stacy** is married to **Paul** and she is also employed by the Beaumont Health System. They have two sons, **PJ** (21) and **Nick** (19). **Janelle** is the mother of 16-year-old triplets, **Jacob, Drew** and **Ashley**. Nothing makes Marilyn happier than when their grandchildren come over to hang out with her and Rick – they love to play games or swim in their back yard pool or just be with them. Their grandchildren are extremely musically and artistically talented and Marilyn is one proud grandma – and rightly so.

Both Rick and Marilyn come from large families and their families are very important to them. They have monthly dinners and have shared some wonderful cruises with their siblings over the years. It wouldn't be a *One to One* event without the full support of the Brozovic extended family – they support us in all our endeavors.

Marilyn goes the extra mile, whether it's organizing something for the support group or planning a family outing. She is forever reaching out to her neighbors and friends to invite them over for a nice dinner and a round of cards. If something piques her interest, she instantly jumps on the computer to research it to find out if it can be used in some way for "the greater good." She seldom sits still and is always a step ahead of the rest of us – it must be those dancing shoes she wears for her recitals! Our *One to One* Support Group is extremely fortunate to have Marilyn at our helm.



HAPPY SURVIVORSary!



Nannette Gearhart	22
Terrie Karebian	18
Julie Fisk	16
Debra Frick.	13
Deanna Cosens	10
Sharon Witkowski	10
Cheryl DiChiera	9
Laura Marmorstein	4
Diane Barretta	2

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Please join us for our ZOOM meetings at 4:30 pm on the second and fourth Thursdays each month.

* September 9 and 23 *

* October 14 and 28 *

* November 11 and December 9 *

An email will be sent to everyone four days prior to each video support group meeting asking if you would like to participate. A separate email with a link will be sent to those who reply one day prior to the meeting.

If your SURVIVORSary is missing, we did not receive an updated form from you.

Please contact Marilyn Brozovic via email: brozovicm87@gmail.com

Newsletter information is presented in summary form, is general in nature and provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended in any way to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Objectives of support group:

- ✦ *Provide a forum for ovarian cancer patients to address concerns;*
- ✦ *Support each other through initial treatment phase, during potential recurrence, and with issues related to long term survival;*
- ✦ *Establish core group of survivors willing to visit newly diagnosed patients;*
- ✦ *Increase awareness of ovarian cancer, including its symptoms and risk factors, in the hope of achieving earlier detection and treatment.*