



drugs move from animal testing to human testing through community studies. The FDA “typically requires proof of safety and effectiveness of a new anticancer drug in a large clinical trial before it can be used broadly in patient care.”

According to the National Cancer Institute, clinical trials are critical to progress against cancer. It says “clinical trials are essential for moving new methods of preventing, diagnosing, and treating cancer from the laboratory to physicians’ offices and other clinical settings and, ultimately, to improve care and quality of life for people with cancer.”

The staff in the JENCC Clinic Research Department review every new patient’s case to see if there is a clinical trial that matches the particular diagnosis and situation. Their arsenal of options includes trials from a variety of alliances, but JENCC participates primarily with three groups:

- The Harvard University based “ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group” is one of the largest, and oldest, groups launched to perform clinical trials in cancer patients. This group partners with over 6,000 physicians, nurses, pharmacists, statisticians, and clinical research associates.
- “Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology” includes a network of over 10,000 cancer specialists contributing their expertise, including The Mayo Clinic.
- “NRG Oncology” is a leading protocol organization within the National Clinical

Trials Network. As one of the first groups to undertake large-scale studies of breast cancer prevention, NRG was instrumental in bringing Tamoxifen (a revolutionary drug effective in treating certain types of breast cancer) through FDA approval. The group continues its pioneering research through affiliations with over 6,000 physicians and 300 sites in the US, Canada, and Australia.

The term “clinical trial” might sound scary to some, and there are patients who don’t want to be “a guinea pig.” But there are others who see the bigger picture. If your medical oncologist approves a treatment plan that includes a clinical trial, and you agree to participate, JENCC’s clinical research associates work closely with you, your physicians, nurses, insurance specialists, and lab personnel to conduct data collection and submission, and interpret the procedures to guide administration of the new treatment. And now, because of cancer patients participating in clinical trials, Patty is excited about “a new arrow in our quiver” – targeted cancer treatment with immunotherapy.

Differing from chemotherapy, immunotherapy is “the hottest thing going,” according to Patty. “Chemotherapy is a medicine that kills off fast-growing cells. Immunotherapy is trying to key in just on the cancer cells and leave the normal cells alone,” she explains.

Patty describes a cancer cell as a fast-growing ball covered with locked doors. To stop the growth, you need to find the right key to open the right door and shut the cell down. With immunotherapy, not only do you find the right

key, but when you open the door, you can shut down mostly the cancer cells.

Chemotherapy is very effective at killing off fast growing cells, which is what cancer is. Immunotherapy not only signals the cancer cell to stop growing and dividing, it also signals your own immune system that this cell has a problem and needs to be gone. Chemotherapy remains the backbone of many treatments that may be combined with immunotherapy.

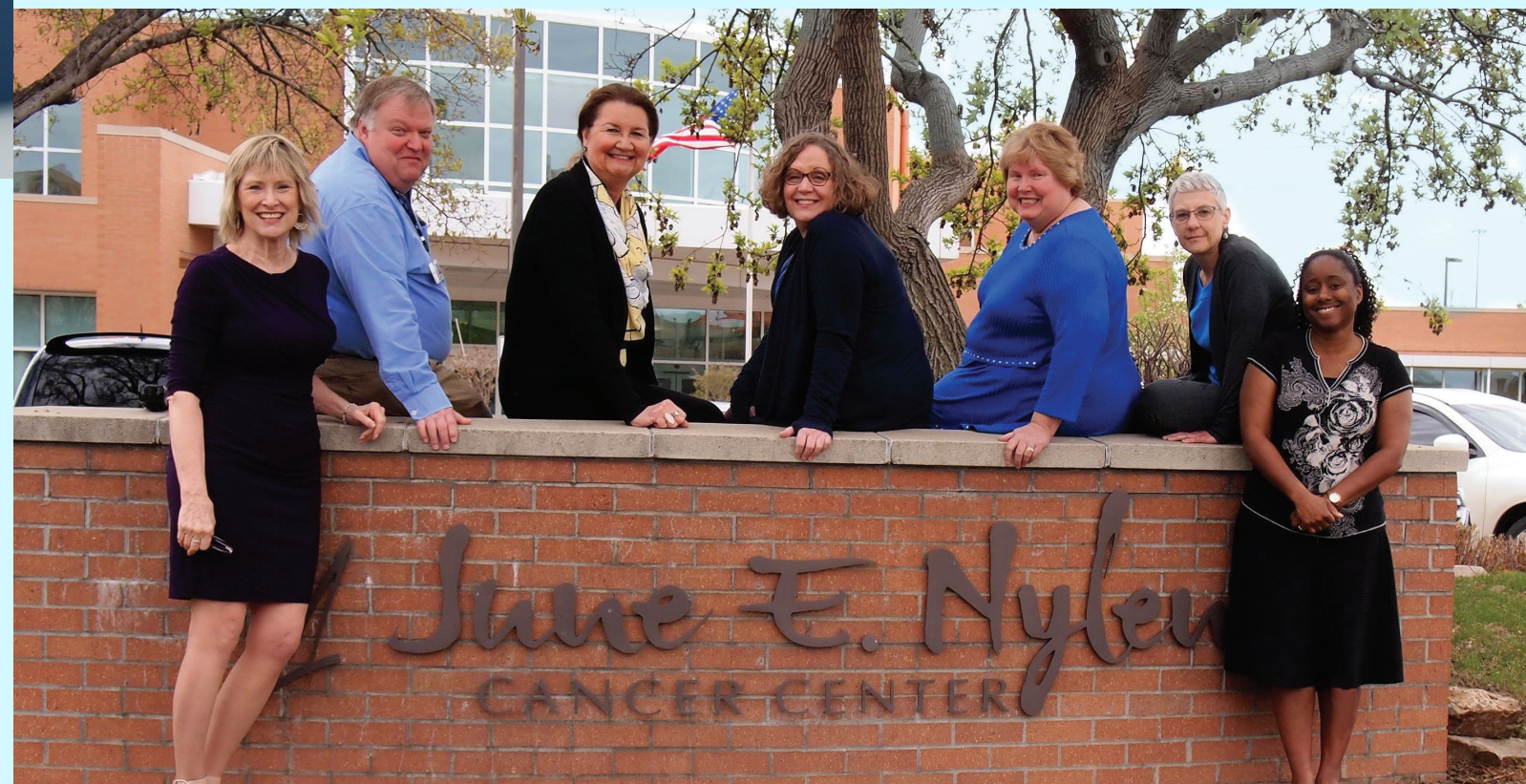
And how do we keep advancing care and hope for cancer patients? “Nationwide only 3-5 percent of patients with cancer participate in a clinical trial. We could have a lot more new drugs and options with more participation,” Patty expresses. “Through clinical trials, we’re changing the face of medicine for our patients. Imagine what could happen if that participation number would grow!”

Visit [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov) to learn more about clinical trials and their importance in advancements in treatments and finding the cure for cancer. To learn more about the June E. Nylene Cancer Center and clinical trials, visit [NyleneCancerCenter.com](http://NyleneCancerCenter.com) or call 712.252.0088.



712-252-0088  
230 Nebraska St., Sioux City, IA 51101  
[www.nylencancercenter.com](http://www.nylencancercenter.com)

The June E. Nylene Cancer Center's Research Department as of April 2019



# TRAIL FOR THE FUTURE

BY MELANIE OLSEN

Patty Skorey-Solberg, RN, CCRP, has been at the June E. Nylene Cancer Center for over 16 years and finds her work to be extremely rewarding. But she longs for the day when she’ll be told she’s lost her job – when a cure for cancer has finally been discovered.

A breast cancer survivor of over 22 years, Patty knows cancer personally, which makes her work in the Clinic Research Department at the June E. Nylene Cancer Center (JENCC) important, and real. Advances in breast cancer treatments, (like the HER2 gene discovery), happened because of clinical

trials and research, which ultimately led to the development of immunotherapy. “That quite literally changed the face of cancer treatment,” Patty explains.

Clinical trials are a mechanism of the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). New