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Led by Dr. Cataldo Doria, **Capital Health Cancer Center** takes bold steps to deepen its commitment to delivering uncompromising cancer care close to home. page 22



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Capital Health Cancer Center takes bold steps to deepen its commitment to delivering uncompromising cancer care close to home.

by **BILL DONAHUE** | photography by **ALISON DUNLAP**



Dr. Cataldo Doria, medical director of Capital Health Cancer Center

Cataldo Doria, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., FACS, has become internationally known for his expertise as a hepatopancreato-biliary surgeon. Also, in the past two and a half years, he has reinforced his reputation as a skilled builder of sorts. Rather than focus on the accomplishments of the recent past, however, he's focused on the future and the promise it holds.

In September 2018, when Dr. Doria started his new job as medical director of Capital Health Cancer Center, he had an ambitious goal: to transform Capital Health's nascent oncology program into one of the region's foremost destinations

for patients facing a cancer diagnosis. Although Capital Health did not have an established cancer center at the time, he knew the organizational commitment and existing infrastructure would enable him to rise to the challenge.

"I have not had too many jobs in my life," says Dr. Doria, who came to Capital Health after serving as the surgical director of the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center – Jefferson Liver Tumor Center at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. "This is my third job. In my two previous jobs, I was given the tasks of building something from nothing or rebuilding

something that was not working. When I saw this opportunity here, I knew I wanted to be involved."

Capital Health has since made "an extraordinary investment in human talent and technology," in Dr. Doria's words. As a result, Capital Health Cancer Center, which is part of Capital Health Medical Center – Hopewell in Pennington, New Jersey, has been able to make tremendous strides in a brief amount of time. For example, the center has grown to include a state-of-the-art radiation oncology suite, a number of da Vinci Surgical Systems for highly precise robotic-assisted surgery, and

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a team of talented surgeons from various areas of specialty—namely, breast, colorectal, gynecologic oncology, and thoracic, among others.

Capital Health has also obtained vital accreditations and recognitions that are characteristic of the level of care patients receive, including designation in 2020 as a Center of Excellence in Robotic Surgery from the Surgical Review Corporation. More recently, National Pancreas Foundation (NPF) recognized Capital Health Cancer Center as an NPF center for treating pancreatic cancer. To earn the NPF recognition, Capital Health had to meet comprehensive standards developed by a task force of pancreatic cancer experts and patient advocates.

Opening Doors

Perhaps the most significant step forward came in March, when Capital Health entered into an affiliation with Temple University Hospital for liver transplant and advanced surgical services. Under the terms of the affiliation, Capital Health patients who are approved candidates will be able to receive liver transplants at Temple, and will receive pre- and post-transplant care at Capital Health Medical Center – Hopewell under the direction of both Capital Health and Temple physicians. Similarly, Temple University Hospital patients who are approved candidates will receive ex vivo liver resection with liver auto-transplant, and robotic-assisted Whipple procedures at Capital Health and will receive pre- and post-surgical care at Temple University Hospital under the direction of both Temple and Capital Health physicians.



Dr. Doria anticipates continued progress in the months and years ahead. For example, Capital Health Cancer Center is working to achieve NCORP accreditation, referring to the National Cancer Institute’s Community Oncology Research Program. Such an honor would bring advanced cancer clinical trials and care-delivery studies to the communities Capital Health serves. Capital Health will also further its relationship with organizations such as the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute, a Doylestown, Pennsylvania-based nonprofit research institute devoted to drug discovery and clinical therapies designed to help patients coping with liver cancer and other deadly diseases.

“Every day we have another major pharma or device company coming to us and saying they want to work with us by making us a site for multi-center trials,” he adds. “The accreditations and relationships

we have established are important, because they are yet another recognition for the excellent work we are doing here.”

Dr. Doria credits the cancer center’s early success to his colleagues, as well as the leadership and forethought of the administration. While Capital Health has spent more than a century serving the surrounding community, Dr. Doria believes the organization is better positioned than ever to provide exceptional, life-saving care close to home.

“The old paradigm was to send patients out into the healthcare delivery system for specialized care,” he says. “We have basically inverted the paradigm—providing the specialized care they need close to home. Capital Health has hired people like me and invested lots of capital for the latest technology. Now we have the technology, the skills, and the understanding to bring the expertise directly to the community.”

And, more importantly, he believes it’s just getting started. ■



Capital Health Cancer Center

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