

suburban life

Cheers!
pg. 20



**Also
Inside:**
Top physicians,
Chesco's finest,
and more

ALLIANCE
Cancer Specialists

Dr. Mark Shahin has joined **Alliance Cancer Specialists** as their new Chief Surgical Officer, and brings with him 25 years of GYN Oncology experience. page 52



A New Era at Alliance

Dr. Mark Shahin has joined **Alliance Cancer Specialists** as their new chief surgical officer. He brings 25 years of GYN oncology experience to Philadelphia’s top private oncology practice, known for exceptional care and cutting-edge cancer treatments.

by **MATT COSENTINO** | photos by **JODY ROBINSON**

Mark S. Shahin, M.D., FACOG, FACS, has made important decisions throughout his life by following his head and his heart. In early February 2023, that approach led him to a new endeavor that he believes will be incredibly rewarding for him and immensely beneficial to patients throughout the region.

As the new chief surgical officer of Alliance Cancer Specialists, he joins a team of 34 board-certified physicians and nine advanced practitioners who treat all types of cancers and blood disorders at 14 locations in Bucks, Delaware, and Montgomery counties. His mission is to drive the expansion of Alliance’s services using his expertise.

“I’m excited for the opportunity,” says Dr. Shahin. “Our goal at Alliance is to bring excellent quality care—and that includes surgery and highly specialized, personalized medicine—to the communities where the patients live. We also want to ensure that we give the patients and

their families adequate time and attention, and to partner with them to have the best experience while getting the best outcomes from a cancer perspective.”

After previously serving in various leadership positions in hospital settings, including one of the area’s leading health systems, Dr. Shahin was drawn to Alliance for several reasons. He has worked with Alliance doctors in the past and characterizes them as “first-class physicians with great skills and very knowledgeable.” He also has a personal connection to the practice, as his uncle was treated for leukemia by Alliance physician Marc Chernoff, D.O., and raved about the customized care and individual attention he received.

Dr. Shahin also appreciates that he is no longer linked to only one hospital since Alliance has affiliations with nine hospital systems including Doylestown Hospital, Grand View Hospital, and St. Mary Medical Center. This allows patients to receive care at multiple convenient locations. Finally, he emphasizes that Alliance’s relationship with The US Oncology Network “sealed the deal” for him, as it brings a national presence, including clinical research and unique opportunities for his patients.

“I have colleagues around the country who work with The US Oncology Network, and they are all really happy about their arrangements and how they are able to deliver care,” he says. “The management of the office and the practice is not something physicians necessarily go to school for. This organization offers many years of oncology practice management, and along the way they’ve had some best industry standard recommendations that they forward to the practices. It’s a more physician-friendly environment than some of the university health care systems that I had been part of.”

Dr. Shahin’s move to Alliance marks yet another step forward in his impressive career. It’s all the more remarkable considering that he did not initially plan on a career in medicine. Having come from a family of engineers, he majored in bioengineering at Syracuse University with the



Our goal at Alliance is to bring excellent quality care to the communities where the patients live.”

– Dr. Mark Shahin, Alliance Cancer Center

role or effectiveness,” he continues. “You’re minimizing toxicity and side effects, and you’re giving them treatment that actually has utility in that particular disease.”

One of Dr. Shahin’s primary objectives at Alliance is to establish a surgical division within the network as a convenience for patients who require critical procedures. He has already taken steps to turn this possibility into a reality.

“My goal is that within the next five years we have two gynecologic cancer specialists, two breast cancer specialists, and a surgical oncologist who can help provide those services to patients,” he says. “I’m starting something new that this organization did not have, and there’s a certain level of enthusiasm and excitement about that.”

His other mission is to bring more clinical trials to the area through The US Oncology Network. Doing so would create opportunities for patients in the Philadelphia area to receive new and potentially life-changing treatments before they become widely available.

“Just this past year, through the clinical trials that we implemented some five years ago, we completely revamped the care of patients with endometrial cancer,” he says. “The results were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and they are completely practice-changing. Those changes have been implemented and the patients are the ultimate beneficiary of them.

“I encourage every patient who comes in to ask questions about available clinical trials,” he continues. “Patients who participate in those trials can get the latest and most advanced treatments. That’s good for them, and it also helps to advance the field.” ■



intent of following the same path. He was introduced to medical courses while in college, and the experience convinced him to shift gears. He attended medical school at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine in the Chicago area, where he discovered the passion that would become the focus of his professional life.

“Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would go into OB/GYN,” he admits. “I did a rotation in the specialty and spent a week with a mentor of mine by the name of John Lurain at Northwestern. That week changed my life, because what I saw is that the practice of gynecologic oncology allowed me to utilize internal medicine knowledge, it allowed me to excel in surgery, and it also provided an opportunity to have a long-term relationship with the patient.”

Dr. Shahin continues to be driven by his desire to change patients’ lives for the better,

and is encouraged by the many strides cancer care has made since his early days in the field. He cites advances such as personalized medicine, targeted therapies, and minimally invasive and robotic-assisted surgery. Given these positive developments, among others, there is more optimism than ever in terms of where cancer care is headed.

“I think in the past 25 years, the knowledge about how cancers develop has exploded,” he says. “It started in the late ’90s with The [Human] Genome Project, but that just opened the door to a whole host of tools that allowed us to figure out how cancers use different pathways to grow. The level of sophistication with which we approach cancer today is just so different than the way I was trained.

“All these advances mean there’s not only hope, but also you’re not wasting your patient’s time with a treatment that probably has no

Visit AllianceCancer.com for more information about Alliance Cancer Specialists, including details about its multiple locations throughout the Philadelphia area.