At **St. Mary Medical Center**, breast cancer patients of all ages receive warm, personalized, and expert treatment from a multidisciplinary, collaborative team all under one roof.

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Dr. Russell Reisner, a breast surgical oncologist at St. Mary Medical Center

by **Matt Cosentino**

photo by
Alison Dunlap

Sabina Milosavljevic speaks with Dr. Russell Reisner, a breast surgical oncologist at St. Mary Medical Center. Milosavljevic sought treatment for breast cancer at St. Mary after receiving her diagnosis in March 2024.

A Seamless Approach to Battling Breast Cancer

While some may shy away from talking about their breast cancer diagnosis, Sabina Milosavljevic has been open about her journey, which started when she was 36 years old. The way she sees it, sharing her story could inspire someone else to get a life-saving screening they otherwise would not have received.

Because of her young age, Milosavljevic did not think of cancer when she discovered a change in the tissue of her left breast. When the diagnosis came, in March 2024, she sought care from the team of experts at St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, where her first child had been born 18 months earlier. Today, she's happy to be cancer-free—and determined to make sure other women know that breast cancer can happen at any age.

"I realized how many young women actually have breast cancer or are genetically predisposed to it," she says. "People are aware that breast cancer is a thing, but are they aware that it's a thing in our age group? Not as much, I don't think, because I certainly wasn't. In terms of decreasing the fear, so many people are afraid to get checked, and when it gets to the point that they have to go, they're already at Stage 3 or 4, and now they're fighting for their lives."

Russell Reisner, M.D., a breast surgical oncologist who is part of a multidisciplinary team at St. Mary, quarterbacked Milosavljevic's care. He is well aware of how breast cancer can affect a wide range of patients, not just because of his work but also because his own wife was not much older than Milosavljevic when she waged her own fight against the disease.

"I certainly think that I have a more personal understanding of things, especially in relation to the caregivers, because I've been on that side of the discussion," Dr. Reisner says. "I think because of that, I can offer insights that other physicians might not have."

His advice may differ based on the age of the patient. For example, because of Milosavljevic's age and overall good health, it was determined that she could handle chemotherapy before undergoing a double mastectomy, which she did last September. She then elected to have implant-based reconstruction, which was also performed at St. Mary.

The whole process lasted a little over a year. Milosavljevic, a Feasterville resident, could not have been more satisfied with the care she received at St. Mary, where she was always greeted warmly by name and was able to get appointments in a timely manner.

"I felt like it was good luck that I gave birth to my son there," she says. "I also did my research, and they have a really good reputation when it comes to cancer treatment. I never felt like a lonely cancer patient in a cancer center. The warmth of the people who work there made the time fly by … and a lot of the patients were very chipper and wanted to talk and give advice. That helped a lot."

St. Mary's approach to care means that members of a patient's treatment team—medical oncologists, surgical and radiation oncologists, and plastic and reconstructive surgeons, among others—are able to easily collaborate on the treatment plan. As a result, the patient receives expert, coordinated care expediently.

"We have a nice situation here," Dr. Reisner says. "Everyone is under the same roof and we can make those things happen seamlessly."

Milosavljevic admits to feeling anxious about the prospect of her cancer returning, but she will continue seeing Dr. Reisner for regular follow-ups. If she should need treatment again, the team at St. Mary will be ready to step in.

"I think what we offer patients that many places cannot give is a more personalized approach," Dr. Reisner adds. "When our patients call with questions, they speak with their primary team, whether it's me, our plastic surgeons, or our medical oncologists. Not only do I think patients appreciate that, but I think it translates to speedier and more efficient care, and problems get fixed more quickly." ∎