

CenterNews



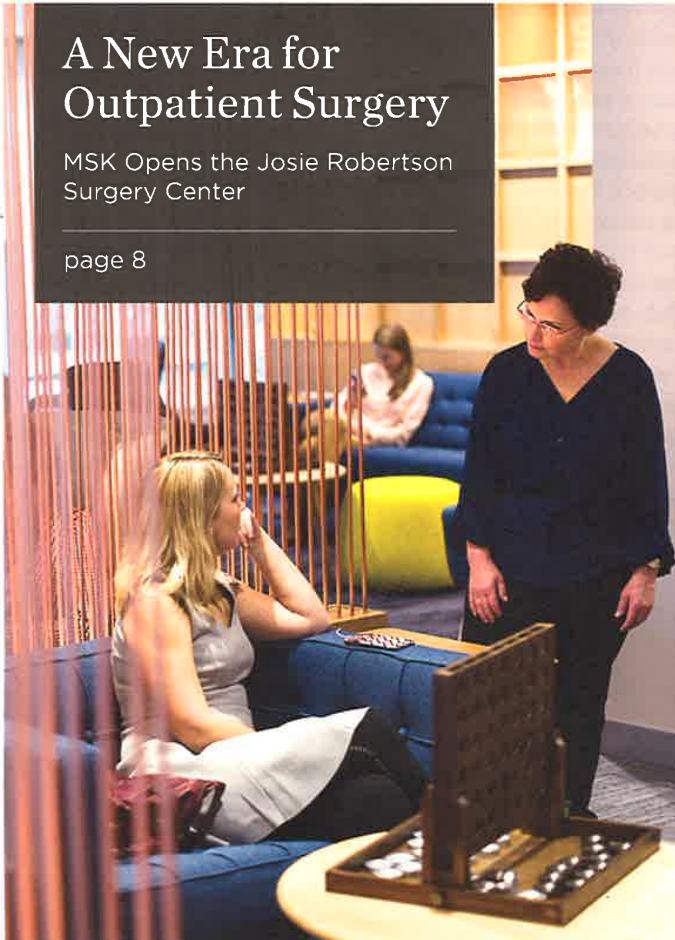
MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING CANCER CENTER

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

Inventing the Future: Outpatient Cancer Surgery

Many cancer surgeries that traditionally required hospitalization can today occur on an outpatient basis. Memorial Sloan Kettering's new Josie Robertson Surgery Center marks a significant advance in outpatient cancer surgery, sparing no detail to enhance the patient experience.



The Josie Robertson Surgery Center offers calming, open, light-filled spaces designed to make the outpatient surgery experience less stressful. Shown here is the waiting area for patients and caregivers.

Even before they enter the beautiful, thoughtfully designed building on the day of their surgery, patients at the Josie Robertson Surgery Center (JRSC) have already embarked on a journey in which every step has been scrupulously planned to be as safe, smooth, and pleasant as possible.

"This unrivaled facility is the result of years of research by our experts that's now been translated into the most effective and personal outpatient surgical care," says Brett Simon, Director of the JRSC.

"Our goal is to provide patients with an unmatched experience while they are with us at the JRSC and then enable them to return home and resume their daily activities," he says. "Designing a way to get them to that point safely and quickly is a significant advance in cancer care pioneered at MSK over the past several years."

The center was established with a gift from the Robertson Foundation, established in 1996 by legendary investor Julian H. Robertson, Jr., his wife, Josephine (Josie) Robertson, and their family. The late Mrs. Robertson was elected to MSK's Board of Overseers in 2004.

Meticulous Planning for Better Outcomes

While the JRSC features the most highly advanced surgical technology, the innovations go beyond enhanced medical techniques. Every stage of care has been designed to minimize discomfort and speed recovery time. A pilot program conducted at Memorial Hospital involving nearly 10,000 cases allowed MSK's surgical teams to refine every element of the outpatient care process.

"What's unique about what we're doing at the Josie Robertson Surgery Center is the careful management of patients from

end to end, starting the moment the surgery decision is made," Dr. Simon says.

As patients approach the day of their procedure, an online patient portal enables them to communicate directly with medical staff. (An app for mobile devices



Rebecca Twersky, JRSC's Chief of Anesthesia

will be available soon.) They also receive frequent personal notifications from the staff to familiarize them with the facility and instruct them on preparing for the operation.

A Hospital That Feels More like a Hotel

When they arrive at the JRSC the day of their surgery, patients immediately notice the calming, welcoming ambience. A concierge greets them in the lobby. Floor-to-ceiling windows let in abundant natural light and offer sweeping views of the East River. Once patients are checked in, a real-time location system gives them the flexibility to move around, and staff can still find them when needed.

Specially designed areas allow family members and caregivers to rest, eat, read, go online, exercise, or just have a quiet moment. The patient and caregiver waiting area on the third floor includes a café, artwork, tables with board games and crossword puzzles, and an Xbox station for video games. Tables and chairs, clustered in small groups called campsites, enable people to be together while they wait to see their loved one.

Each short-stay patient room is private, with its own bathroom, and includes bedside tablets equipped with video conferencing technology to allow patients to continue securely communicating with their doctors, caregivers, family, and friends after surgery. If a patient needs to stay overnight, these rooms include sleeper sofas or chairs to accommodate a caregiver.



Art of Healing

Alice Momm, whose connection with MSK began when she curated art for the Evelyn H. Lauder Breast and Imaging Center, selected the approximately 200 pieces of art in the JRSC. Inspired by the views of the East River from the building, Ms. Momm chose artwork that blends different textures and media and combines flow, color, and light to create a healing feeling.

In addition, the JRSC has been designed to inspire patients to get out of bed as soon as they can. Central gathering areas outside the patient rooms encourage them to socialize, relax, or have a buffet-style snack with family members and caregivers. In the corridors, artwork and inscriptions on the walls serve as walking milestones, so patients can track their progress.

Diligent Follow-Up

After surgery, patients are closely monitored as they recover in the facility and are then deemed ready to be sent home. But the JRSC's commitment to patient care doesn't end there. Medical staff will check in electronically with patients on a daily basis

after they're discharged to ensure that their recovery is going smoothly, answer questions, and address any issues. This daily symptom reporting also gives JRSC physicians, nurses, and clinical staff information that will help them learn from and reevaluate procedures, such as changing pain medication prescriptions or altering how anesthesia is given.

"The increased attention to follow-up at the Josie Robertson Surgery Center really stands out," says Rebecca Twersky, Chief of Anesthesia at the JRSC. "After patients go home, we'll be checking in with them constantly to guide their recovery and then using data from these interactions to see how we can improve our care."

Nursing: A Personal Connection

MSK nurses played a major role in the planning and creation of the JRSC. "Our hope is that patients have a warm feeling that we're all there to dedicate our time to them — to treat each person not just as a patient but also as someone special," says Marcia Levine, Director of Perioperative Nursing Services at the JRSC.

Nurses at the center have been trained to understand the needs of patients before and after their procedures.

"Our nurses have a comprehensive understanding of every aspect of a patient's surgical preparation, the surgery itself, and the entire recovery pathway," says urologic surgeon Vincent Laudone, the



Patients and caregivers receive badges that allow JRSC staff to find them at all times.

Sophisticated Surgical Technology

The 12 operating rooms at the JRSC have been equipped to perform specific surgeries, including minimal-access and robot-assisted procedures. Some of the most common operations performed here include breast surgery with immediate reconstruction, prostate, kidney, ovarian, uterine, and thyroid surgery.

“The operating rooms at the JRSC feature state-of-the-art equipment incorporating the most-advanced technology available,” says Dr. Laudone.

He explains that surgical lights automatically adjust to eliminate shadows in the operating field and are temperature-adjusted to maintain accurate tissue color. Wide-screen, super high-definition monitors are employed for laparoscopic and robotic surgery and can be used in all procedures to visually consult with onsite pathologists.



Gathering areas outside recovery rooms encourage patients to socialize or have a snack.



Surgeon Carol Brown visits with a patient in one of the JRSC's private, technologically advanced recovery rooms.

JRSC's Chief of Surgery. Nurses' input was vital in devising the processes that are in place at JRSC, many of them different from standard procedure at most hospitals.

For example, the presurgical nurse personally escorts patients to the operating room and makes the introduction to their OR nurse. This helps ease apprehension, as each patient has already developed a relationship with his or her presurgical nurse.

The effort to increase patient comfort continues after the operation as well. In the traditional model of outpatient surgery, patients went to a recovery room following surgery (also known as a post-anesthesia care unit), then a second room to continue to recuperate — with different teams of nurses at every step. At the JRSC, patients will remain in the same room for their entire postoperative stay, reducing transfers and changes in their nursing team, which will make for a better patient experience.

“The Josie Robertson Surgery Center is the model for the future of outpatient cancer surgery,” Dr. Simon says. “It is the culmination of years of research and experience at MSK, visionary thinking, and an enormous collaborative effort that will give our patients an unprecedented level of care. And every day we'll be looking at how we can make it even better.” ●