

Phoenix Baptist Hospital & Medical Center

Beating Breast Cancer—*One Woman at a Time*

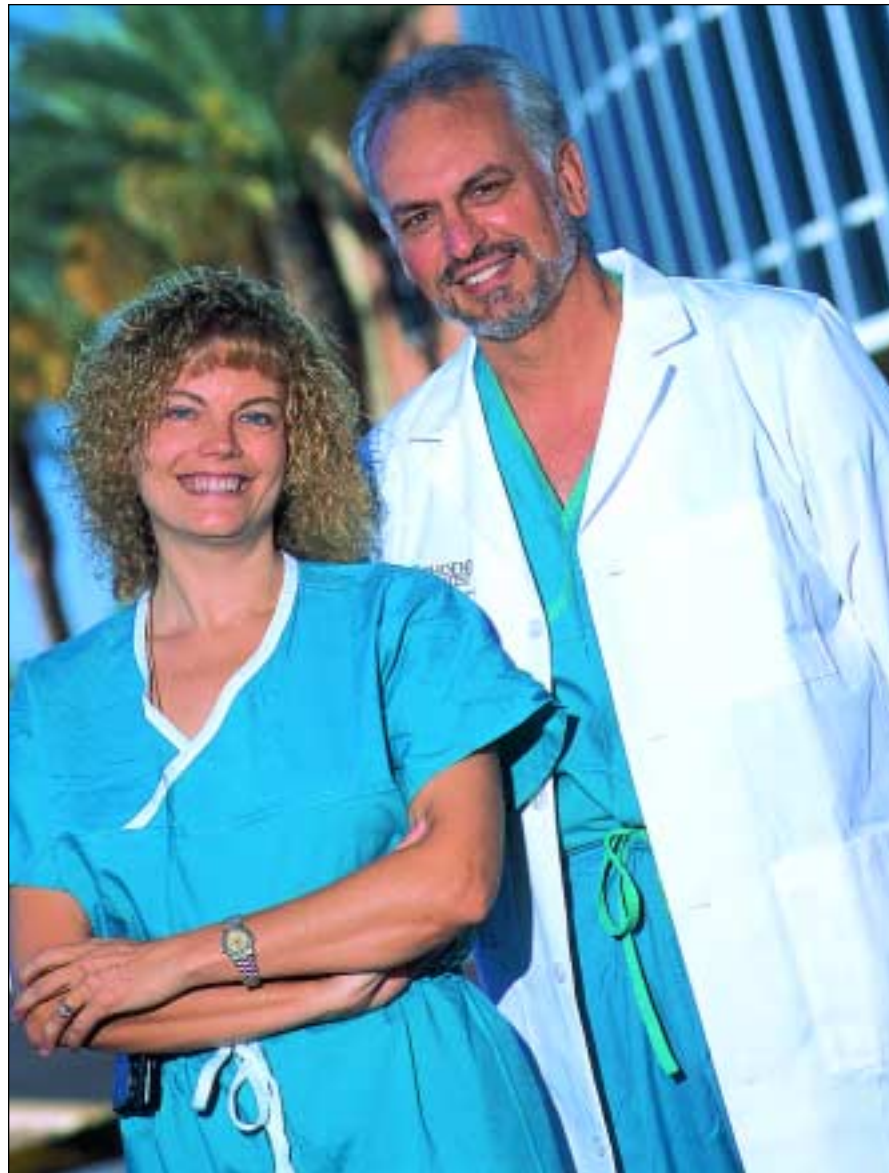
Three years ago Teri Pyle found a small lump in her breast. “When my mammogram was clear, my doctor did an ultrasound, then suggested watching the spot for six months,” said Pyle.

But Pyle sought a second opinion at Phoenix Baptist Hospital’s Breast Health Center. Although her age—33—made her a low risk, her mother had been treated for breast cancer just two years previously. She saw **Victor Zannis, M.D.**, breast surgeon at the Breast Health Center and her mother’s doctor. Palpating the breast, Dr. Zannis noted not only one lump, but two. He wasn’t comfortable waiting, either.

Soon, decisions were required. Here, Ms. Pyle would be part of those decisions, aided by the Center’s physicians, staff and extensive resources available to her. “Women must know that in breast cancer, one size does *not* fit all,” explains **Christa Corn, M.D.**, another surgeon on the team at the Breast Health Center. “And a negative mammogram simply means mammography is not helpful in this particular case. Although most women with abnormal mammograms, breast pain or lumps find they’re benign, they need to know you can’t ignore lumps. Although a surgeon may believe a lump is benign, it boils down to what it looks like at the cellular level under a microscope. It’s not a simple, production-line decision. It is a complicated thought process, and you need a team—including the woman herself—to consider the options. We’re treating a whole person for her life. This means understanding the disease process and making sure you’re still disease-free in 10 or 20 years.”

“Mammograms detect about 80 percent of cancers,” explains Dr. Zannis. “The question becomes, ‘How do you pick up the other 20 percent?’” Screening techniques are improving and include newer technology like MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and PET scanning (positron emission tomography)—all available at the Breast Health Center, which provides the full range of breast care services, from routine screening mammography through diagnosis and the full range of treatment options, including reconstruction, to emotional support and aftercare.

Biopsy is often the final word in diag-



Doctors Victor Zannis and Christa Corn perform minimally invasive breast surgery at the Breast Health Center at Phoenix Baptist Hospital & Medical Center.

nosis, and the Center seeks the least invasive technique yielding high quality results—a departure from the norm, according to Dr. Zannis. “Of the 1.1 million breast biopsies done in the United States each year, only 300,000 of them use minimally invasive techniques,” he says. “These numbers should be reversed. Here, we use minimally invasive techniques with 80 percent of the women we see.” These techniques disturb less healthy tissue, require local—rather than general—anesthesia, produce less breast disfigurement and

require much shorter procedure and recovery times.

Unlike many clinics, the Center offers a variety of biopsy options, including:

- Core needle biopsy (the Tru-Cut needle)
- Vacuum assisted needle biopsy (the Mammotome Breast Biopsy System)
- Large core biopsy with stereotactic X-ray or ultrasound guidance (Site Select Large Core Breast Biopsy System)

Physicians discuss pros and cons of the options, encouraging women to seek additional information at the hospital’s Breast Health Resource Center and ask questions before making a decision.

Another recent surgical transformation is sentinel node biopsy, according to Zannis. This involves checking the first node that detects breast cancer, rather than subjecting a woman to a radical dissection of all lymph nodes. The Center’s Lymphedema Reduction and Management Program employs the Valley’s only certified lymphedema specialist. “The majority of the women having radical lymph node dissection don’t need it,” says Dr. Zannis, noting it’s only necessary to remove affected nodes.

Dr. Zannis says doctors appreciate Phoenix Baptist Hospital’s cutting edge, up-to-date facilities that enable breast specialists to offer women options not given in other places. “Physicians appreciate this environment that enables us to practice in modern ways, offering women minimally invasive ways of treating breast cancer, resulting in improved appearance, self-image and self-esteem. We’ve come a long way since the days when women signed away their breasts going into surgery, not knowing if they’d have a breast when they awoke or not. Here, a woman knows what’s happening before she enters the operating room—and it’s usually not mastectomy.”

Eventually, Teri Pyle’s breast cancer did require a mastectomy, and she notes that she doesn’t even have a single scar following reconstructive surgery. After surgery Ms. Pyle attended the Breast Health Center support groups, which regularly draw 20 women a month, until she moved farther away. “My mom still goes, and has made lifelong friends,” she says.

For more information about the Breast Health Center at Phoenix Baptist Hospital and Medical Center, please call (602) 246-5555. ■

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