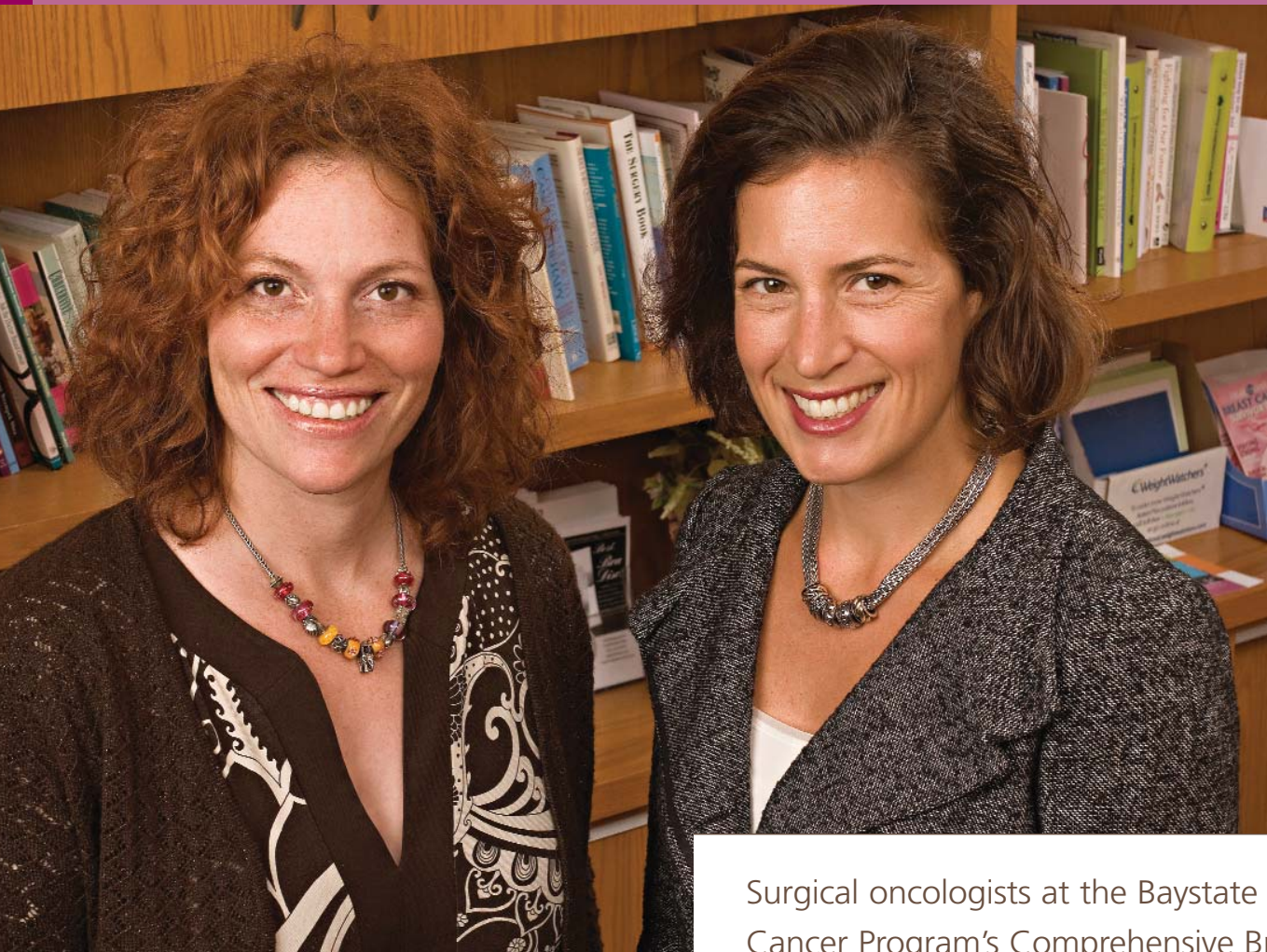


Oncoplastic Surgery

Combining Two Types of Surgery for One Great Result

By Andrew Shanley



Baystate is among only a few hospitals in the Northeast with surgical oncologists trained in oncoplastic surgery: Drs. Susan Cash and Holly Mason.

Surgical oncologists at the Baystate Regional Cancer Program's Comprehensive Breast Center now offer a new type of procedure for patients requiring breast cancer surgery that skillfully merges traditional breast cancer surgery with cosmetic surgery techniques: oncoplastic surgery.

A welcome option for women facing the prospect of a lumpectomy, oncoplastic surgery at Baystate allows specially trained surgical oncologists to remove cancerous tissue from the breast and repair the breast cosmetically – all in one surgery.

New Procedure, New Benefits

Women with breast cancer have traditionally been offered only two surgical options – either a lumpectomy (accompanied by radiation) or a mastectomy. While a lumpectomy preserved the breast, in many cases it left the woman with a much smaller or deformed breast. She then had to undergo a second procedure with a plastic surgeon for repair or reconstruction. Many patients were not given the choice of a lumpectomy depending on the size and location of their tumor.

During oncoplastic surgery, the surgeon removes the breast tumor while also removing some surrounding normal tissue to ensure that all cancer cells have been removed. At the same time, the surgeon fills the gap created by reshaping or moving the tissue around it. The result is a whole breast without an empty cavity, thereby decreasing the risk of a deformed breast.

The benefits to patients are many. Since there is only one surgery, the patient undergoes anesthesia once and experiences one recovery period. Emotional and psychological benefits include reduced anxiety at the thought of multiple surgical procedures and less trauma since the patient does not have to endure the time between surgeries during which the breast is misshapen.

The greatest benefit of oncoplastic surgery is that it may allow women with larger tumors who would otherwise require a mastectomy to instead undergo a lumpectomy using oncoplastic surgery and preserve a natural-appearing breast. Post-lumpectomy radiation is still required as is standard for all breast conservation treatment.

Special Expertise

Baystate is among only a few hospitals in the Northeast with cancer surgeons trained in oncoplastic surgery. Surgical oncologists Holly Mason, MD, director of Breast Surgical Services, and Susan Cash, MD, dedicate their practice exclusively to breast cancer surgery.

“It’s important that patients understand that oncoplastic surgery remains a cancer operation and not a cosmetic procedure, such as breast augmentation,” says Dr. Mason. “Dr. Cash and I have obtained additional training and experience to better understand cosmetic surgery principles, and thus to find a balance between cancer surgery and cosmesis. Our priority, however, is the removal of the cancer and prevention of local recurrence.”

Dr. Cash notes that there are times where breast conservation is not appropriate and that a mastectomy (likely with breast reconstruction performed by a plastic surgeon) is still sometimes the safest option from a cancer standpoint or the best option from a cosmetic standpoint. She says this is especially true for the patient with small breasts.

Refer a Patient

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