**Article** – Philanthropy –Toomey\_d2

Regional Cancer Care Associates–Central Jersey

**Proving Dedication to Patients by Getting Involved to Understand Better and Help More**

*At Regional Cancer Care Associates–Central Jersey, we’re dedicated to community-based cancer care. This means that we pursue the highest standards of care specifically in the service of the communities in which we practice medicine, live, shop and send our kids to school. In other words, we are not merely in the community but of it, and committed to it.*

*As a large and leading medical practice providing top-quality care for cancer, we’re doing our part to improve the lives and hope of cancer patients in Central New Jersey. But we also contribute in other ways, as a practice and as individuals devoted to this goal. This article is the second in our series highlighting the philanthropic contributions of RCCA-CJ’s doctors to cancer care, cancer patients and other healthcare efforts in these communities.*

Kathleen C. Toomey, MD is a caring, dedicated and highly respected medical oncologist with more than 30 years’ experience. Residency- and fellowship-trained at Rutgers, she is medical director of the Steeplechase Cancer Center in Somerset, NJ. In addition, Dr. Toomey has earned [numerous awards of recognition](https://centraljerseyrcca.com/doctors-providers/kathleen-toomey/), including being named a Top Doctor by *Jersey’s Best* and *New Jersey Monthly* magazines and receiving the inaugural Castle Connolly Exceptional Women in Medicine award.

What really stands about Dr. Toomey is her commitment, which she defines in simple, compelling terms: *to take care of patients with serious illness and use all available resources to help them.*

Patients, she says, are how and why she became interested and involved in philanthropy, involvement that has continued to expand throughout the decades.

“I’m always looking for something that can help my patients,” she says. “I want them to know I care about them and this community, and that I want to make things better. This is where I live and serve, and I want to make my part of the world as good as I can.”

This dedication is at the heart of Dr. Toomey’s volunteering for philanthropic and community work.

**AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY**

While in fellowship training in oncology/hematology in the 1980s, Dr. Toomey joined the American Cancer Society (ACS), where through normal involvement she met colleagues who suggested she get involved in the organization—galas, fundraisers, outreach and the like.

“I’m a person who says ‘Yes, let me try; let me see,’” she says. Getting involved, she realized, would leave her better prepared to inform and help patients. “It would allow me to know what programs are available to them, where to get wigs, about transportation options, counseling resources, organizations that help with money or gift cards, etc.” Again, for Dr. Toomey, it is simple. “I guess it’s simply because getting involved helps me help my patients.”

Through the 1980s, Dr. Toomey was also involved with the ACS’ legislative efforts and its public and professional education initiatives, speaking publicly on many occasions.

**CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY CENTRAL NEW JERSEY**

Dr. Toomey was also there at the 2002 inception of the Cancer Support Community Central New Jersey (CSCCNJ), where she serves on the Board of Trustees. CSCCNJ’s mission is to ensure that all people affected by cancer—patients, families and their loved ones—are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action and sustained by community, so that nobody faces cancer alone. The organization has provided more than 81,000 hours of services to nearly 12,000 people, with 89% of all raised funds going directly to its support programs.

**SISTER2SISTER**

Dr. Toomey also serves on the professional advisory board of Sister2Sister. A social worker whom she knew suggested that Dr. Toomey would be a welcome addition to this local support group for minority and underserved women who have breast cancer. She also sees it as providing her with a unique perspective that helps her in her practice.

“It’s one thing to be one-on-one with patients; it’s different being in a group of them,” Dr. Toomey says. “You get to hear their complaints and see the shared problems they have. This helps me to know how to more effectively speak to patients, to realize what they’re not understanding, to get away from doctor-speak and get to where they are. Because we’re all in this together,” she adds.

**FOUNDATION BOARD, ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL SOMERSET**

In addition to her role as medical director of RWJUH’s Steeplechase Cancer Center, Dr. Toomey has been on its foundation’s board since the center opened, and often speaks at its dinner events. The foundation’s philanthropy work includes the Steeplechase Distance Run, which raises funds for the center, and various community outreach efforts.

**FOUNDATION BOARD, REGIONAL CANCER CARE ASSOCIATES**

A vital part of Regional Cancer Care Associates’ (RCCA) oncology team, Dr. Toomey is now also a member of the board of its recently created foundation, which raises funds to help RCCA patients through their cancer journeys.

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO LOCAL HEALTH CLINICS**

Dr. Toomey also contributes to the Zufall Health Center in Somerville and the Zarephath Health Center. Started by two doctors Dr. Toomey trained with, the Zarephath center provides free healthcare to the poor and uninsured. Zufall Health Center strives to create equal opportunity for good health by providing access to quality, affordable and culturally competent healthcare to communities and individuals that experience barriers to care.

To learn more about Dr. Toomey, visit her bio page on the RCCA-CJ website. To find out how you can get involved in the cancer care community as a contributor or volunteer, call 888-824-8312.

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