

# LAURIE PROTON THERAPY CENTER

Precision Radiation is the Answer for Active Breast Cancer Patient

*Tina Fasano loves to ski, cycle and hike – on top of her regular visits to the gym and brisk walks on the Delaware and Raritan Canal.*

*Shown: Tina Fasano, 37, of Franklin Park, was looking for breast cancer treatment options that minimize stress and damage to the heart, so she could remain physically active. Ms. Fasano and her doctor chose proton beam therapy which is a pinpoint accurate form of radiation that could be delivered to her tumor without going beyond it to her heart.*

The 37-year-old Franklin Park resident was used to the normal aches and pain that come with working out, so pain she felt in her left armpit after a ski trip didn't alarm her at first. But the lump she later felt under her left armpit did.

"It just didn't feel right," Ms. Fasano explained. "If you find something, you need to question it and be an advocate for your own health."

Ms. Fasano called her primary care physician immediately and scheduled a mammogram. Based on the results, her radiologist suggested she see a breast surgeon. After undergoing a series of tests that included imaging and a biopsy, Ms. Fasano tested negative for cancer. Her physicians remained concerned though about the lump under her armpit and performed two surgeries to remove it and the surrounding tissue from the suspected area, along with performing a biopsy of the sentinel lymph nodes. The results confirmed Ms. Fasano's worst fear: stage 2 breast cancer.

"I knew in my heart it was breast cancer," Ms. Fasano recalled.

From August to October 2015, Ms. Fasano underwent a chemotherapy regimen that included multiple medications.

Remaining physically active was a priority for Ms. Fasano, so after completing chemotherapy, she met with Sharad Goyal, MD, Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology at Rutgers Robert

Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and a radiation oncologist at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital New Brunswick, to discuss treatment options that would help her achieve that goal.

"I was really concerned about my heart," Ms. Fasano said.

Because it was necessary to treat the internal mammary nodes, which are located on top of the heart, Dr. Goyal thought Ms. Fasano would be a good candidate for proton beam therapy, since it causes less radiation exposure to the heart.

Thankfully, Ms. Fasano already had access to this innovative treatment with the recent opening of the Laurie Proton Therapy Center, a joint program offered by RWJ and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

With proton therapy, the beams can be directed to the precise spot without going beyond the perimeter of the affected tumor site. In Ms. Fasano's case, there would be much less radiation exposure to the heart and lung.

"Many long-term side effects of radiation treatment – heart disease, reduced lung function or secondary cancers – can be significantly reduced, allowing patients to have an improved quality of life," Dr. Goyal noted.

Following her sister Jamie's recommendation, much research and learning more from Dr. Goyal that the treatment could protect

her heart and reduce the risk for heart disease later in life, Ms. Fasano chose proton therapy.

Before undergoing proton therapy, Ms. Fasano received a CT scan while placed in the exact position she would receive treatment. The lungs, heart and breast tissue were identified and mapped out, treatment fields developed and the radiation needed to treat the breast and lymph nodes was calculated. The goal was to avoid exposing Ms. Fasano's heart, lungs and soft tissue as much as possible. Her treatment involved 33 25-minute sessions, five days a week, with the last five days concentrated on the node area.

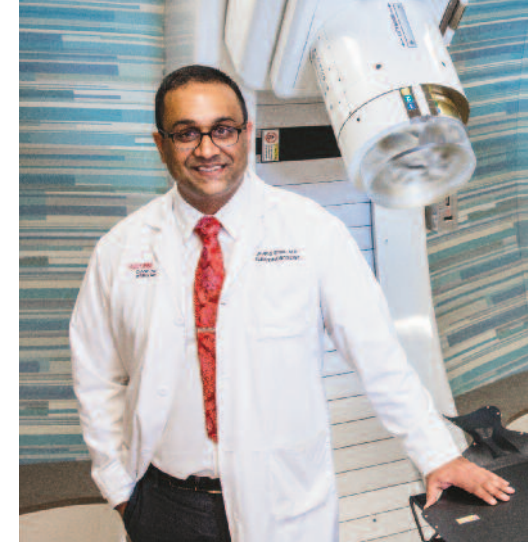
During treatment, she continued working despite bouts of fatigue.

"But the energy I had was different than when treated with chemotherapy. I felt better," she said.

Now finished with a challenging part of her treatment, Ms. Fasano is "focused on getting back to an active lifestyle" and looking forward to buying a home. She has become involved in the Young Survival Coalition, a network of young women who have battled breast cancer. She's happy to share her story and educate others.

"It helps me with reality," Ms. Fasano explained.

Visit [www.rwjprotontherapy.com](http://www.rwjprotontherapy.com) or call 1-888-MD-RWJUH.



Shown above: Sharad Goyal, MD, Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and a radiation oncologist at RWJ, incorporated proton therapy into Ms. Fasano's treatment plan.



## SPRING INTO BEAUTY EVENT

An evening of pampering for our brave breast cancer patients and survivors. Their families are welcome to join.

Friday, May 20 | 4 to 7 p.m.

Location: Arline and Henry Schwartzman Courtyard  
RWJ New Brunswick

Enjoy with us:

- Massage
- Hair styling and wig offerings
- Manicure
- Make-Up
- Jewelry
- Aroma Therapy
- Giveaways

Registration is preferred and space is limited,  
please call 732-253-3928.

Refreshments Provided