

A Survivor's Testimony

“You never think it will happen to you. The PET scan provided me with Peace of Mind.”

— JONI PAAHAO,
Senior Vice President of
Sales/Marketing Aston Resorts Hawaii



FACTS ABOUT BREAST CANCER

- ❖ 1 out of every 9 women will get it.
- ❖ Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women today (after lung cancer) and is the most common cancer among women.
- ❖ The American Cancer Society estimates that approximately 192,200 new cases of invasive breast cancer (Stages I-IV) will be diagnosed among women in the United States each year.
- ❖ The key to surviving breast cancer is early detection and treatment.



Hamamatsu/Queen's
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“...how a Local Girl dealt with Breast Cancer and Beat It!”

JONI PAAHAO IS LIKE MANY WOMEN who live in Hawaii. She lives an active lifestyle in one of the nation's healthiest states. She works long hours at her job (Joni is Senior VP at Aston Resorts overseeing sales and marketing), loves spending time with her extended family and exercises regularly. She has a successful career, wonderful family life; in short she is in the prime of her life.



> Joni Paahao

THEN...IT SHATTERED HER VERY EXISTENCE. Joni was diagnosed with breast cancer. Initially the shock and disbelief left her unable to comprehend the diagnosis. Emotionally, she battled bouts of fear, anger, depression, and confusion. The contemplation of whether she was going to live or die physically and mentally drained her and her loved ones.

AFTER CONSULTING WITH HER DOCTORS, the next step was to determine if the cancer was confined to just her breasts, or if it had spread to other parts of her body. They were not sure, but they had to find out.

TO DETERMINE THIS, She had to endure numerous visits to the hospital as multiple doctors put her through a battery of examinations which included tests on her bones, chest, and blood. These tests were frustrating, frightening, time consuming, and left her with more questions than answers as doctors searched to properly diagnose the extent of her illness.

THEN, HER DOCTOR MENTIONED PET as a possible alternative. Joni decided to give it a try. After going through a PET scan, the diagnosis was quickly given. It was determined that the cancer was confined to her breasts and had not spread. She immediately proceeded with therapy and the cancer was stopped.

IN ONE SIMPLE TEST PET quickly and efficiently gave her the results she and her physicians were looking for. Best of all, it gave her peace of mind.

IT HAS BEEN ALMOST 5 YEARS since Joni took that PET scan and there has been no recurrence of the cancer. Soon, her doctors will consider the cancer in complete remission. PET made it possible to quickly overcome the anxiety of diagnosis so that treatment could be implemented which provided closure to an uncertain period in her life. Now, she can look forward to the best years to come.

WHAT IS PET?

PET stands for positron emission tomography. PET is a non-invasive (non-surgical) procedure that allows physicians to examine the heart, brain, breast, lung, or any other internal organ and detect how it is



working. Unlike a CT or MRI, which take images of the body's organs (anatomy), a PET scan differs in its ability to show the chemical and physical changes occurring in tissues (metabolism), such as sugar metabolism, blood flow, oxygen metabolism, and receptor sites which are used to identify and diagnose various forms of cancer. PET is the most highly effective way to record, identify, and subsequently diagnose many forms of biological disorders.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- 1 | The patient receives an injection of a radioactive isotope tracer which travels to the specific organ to be scanned. The most commonly used compound is a sugar compound (FDG or Fluoro-deoxyglucose) which becomes trapped in the cancer cells.
- 2 | The PET Scanner records the signals the tracers emit as they collect in the tissues targeted for examination.
- 3 | A computer then reconstructs these signals into actual images which reveal information about the biochemical workings within the patient.

BUT DOES IT WORK?

A study undertaken by the Queen's Medical Center between October 1998 and October 1999 on 463 patients who had PET scans proved that:

- ❖ In 33% of the cases, scheduled surgery was cancelled after the nuclear medicine doctor reviewed the PET scan
- ❖ In 15% of the cases, chemotherapy and/or radiation was added to the treatment of the cancer
- ❖ In 7 % of the cases, treatment for the cancer was altogether cancelled because PET showed the cancer to be gone

PET helps doctors & patients make informed decisions about treatment of cancer.

IN ANOTHER STUDY, researchers at the University of California have used PET on 50 patients with breast cancer and found it's a useful guide to the management of the disease. In 60 percent of patients, the type of treatment was changed - from surgery to radiation therapy, for instance, or from one type of chemotherapy to another based on the diagnosis using PET. In over a third of cases, doctors changed the initial stage of the cancer based on the PET. It shows the relevance of PET scanning to treatment decisions in breast cancer, say the researchers.

IS IT SAFE? ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

PET is safe. The radiation exposure is comparable to other radiology examinations.

HOW DOES PET COMPARE TO MAMMOGRAPHY?

Mammography is the first-line diagnostic tool for detecting lumps in the breast. PET is used to determine if a breast cancer has spread after it has been diagnosed, if the cancer has come back, or if chemotherapy has been effective.

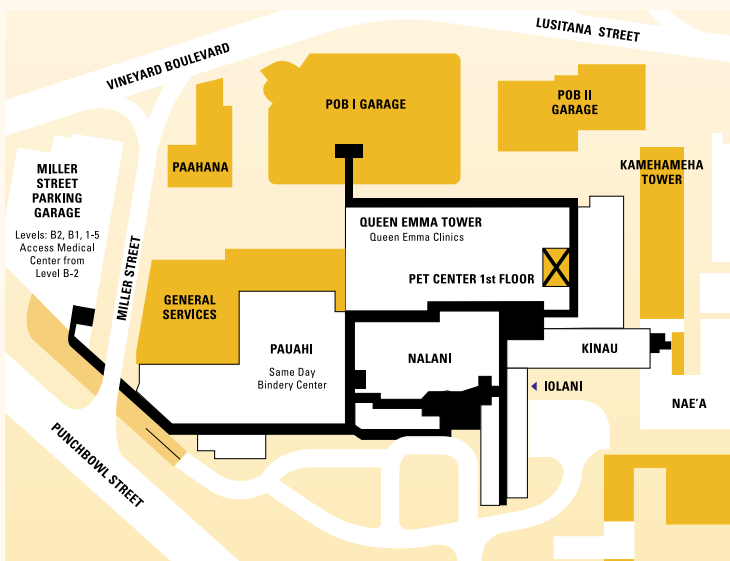
WILL MY INSURANCE COVER PET?

Medicare covers PET once it has been determined that breast cancer is present for the purpose of diagnosing how far along the breast cancer has advanced. The monitoring of treatment for a locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer when a change in therapy is contemplated is also covered as an adjunct to other imaging modalities like CT or MRI. Most insurance companies will follow Medicare's coverage although coverage may need to be preauthorized.

Please note that Medicare continues to have a national non-coverage determination for the initial diagnosis of breast cancer and the initial staging of axillary lymph nodes.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON PET?

Call us at the Hamamatsu/Queen's PET Center at (808) 537-7077 or visit our website at www.queenspetcenter.com for more information.



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