

Focusing on You: New Findings from the COVID-19 and Cancer Consortium

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Dr. Gilberto Lopes, medical oncologist at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, discusses Sylvester's role as a founding member of the COVID-19 and Cancer Consortium, a group of more than 100 cancer centers worldwide researching the impact of the new coronavirus on patients with cancer.

READ TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR:

Focusing on you from your team of experts at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, South Florida's only national cancer institute designated cancer center.

When the novel coronavirus first began spreading across the US, it was unclear how it might affect people with cancer. Through Twitter, a small group of oncologists, including Dr. Gilberto Lopes at the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, talked about the risks and the need for a database, thus launching the COVID-19 and Cancer Consortium.

Dr. Gilberto Lopes:

So we started with five founding institutions, and we now have more than a hundred institutions across the United States and around the world.

NARRATOR:

Some 2,500 patients are participating and providing doctors with a better understanding of the relationship between cancer and COVID-19. Initial findings were recently released at an international meeting of oncologists.

Dr. Lopes:

The most important one being that we should not stop the treatment of cancer. We also found out that people who smoke and those patients who are older are at higher risks of complications.

NARRATOR:

In general, patients with cancer were found to have a higher chance of developing complications from COVID-19. With safety top of mind, Sylvester has implemented new measures to protect patients as they continue their treatments. That's welcome news to Sylvester patients.

Tracey Hecht:

Everyone that you encounter that's a provider is just head to toe in PPE, all of the other patients are in masks. It gives me a lot of confidence that I can go in there and be as healthy as possible while getting my treatment.

Dr. Lopes:

Of course, we all use personal protection equipment. There's a lot of hand hygiene, hand washing, we're always looking into what our mission is, that is to try to keep our patients safe while we can treat their cancer. That sense of mission is what moves us forward.

