

# Building Hope:

## Advancing Cancer Care for Our Community



NANCY HOWELL AGEE  
CEO EMERITUS

“Your belief in our mission fuels our progress.”

### MESSAGE FROM NANCY HOWELL AGEE: A MOMENT TO CELEBRATE, A MISSION TO ADVANCE

Dear Friends,

Cancer touches every one of us, whether as a patient, a loved one, a caregiver or a member of the care team. It is this shared experience that makes the Carilion Taubman Cancer Center such an important and urgent cause for our community.

We have seen this truth reflected in the legacy of leaders like Julie Cooper Wright, a former Carilion Clinic nurse director, whose compassion shaped countless lives, and in the voices of patients who remind us that expert medical care paired with human connection changes everything (her story is below). These stories are why so many across our region have stepped forward with extraordinary generosity, through personal donations, memorial gifts, corporate sponsorships and endowments.

Together, we have already raised \$97 million toward our \$100 million goal. But our work is not yet done. With the campaign running through the end of October, there is still time to honor those we love, support those in treatment and strengthen care in our community for generations to come.

Your gift, no matter the size, is part of a larger story—one that proves world-class cancer care belongs right here at home.

With heartfelt gratitude,

*Nancy*



STEVE ARNER  
PRESIDENT & CEO

“Julie’s life reminds us that great care is deeply human.”

### MESSAGE FROM STEVE ARNER: HONORING JULIE WRIGHT’S LEGACY

Cancer care is first and foremost about people and the treatments and therapies that support them. At Carilion, our teams walk beside patients and families through some of life’s hardest moments, offering compassion, understanding and hope in addition to clinical expertise.

This month, we honor one of our own lost to complications from cancer: Julie Cooper Wright. Julie devoted her career to Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, beginning as a Registered Nurse and rising to become Nurse Director of the Oncology and Palliative Care Units. Beyond her titles, Julie was known for her warmth, steady leadership and a smile that could brighten even the darkest day. She inspired patients, families and colleagues alike with her commitment to caring for others, even as she faced her own cancer journey.

To carry forward Julie’s commitment to care, the Julie Cooper Wright Memorial Nursing Scholarship was established in June 2025. This annual award will support nursing students from our region, ensuring that the values Julie embodied—dedication, compassion and excellence—continue to shape the next generation of caregivers.

Julie’s life reminds us that great care is deeply human. As we look toward the future of the Carilion Taubman Cancer Center, we do so with gratitude for the many caregivers, like Julie, who have shown us the way forward. Their spirit remains at the heart of our mission.

Kind thanks,

*Steve*

[DONATE HERE TO HONOR JULIE OR A LOVED ONE](#)

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## LIVING PROOF: MIKE’S STORY



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When Mike Goforth received his brain tumor diagnosis, he faced a reality many families know too well: life doesn’t stop. His wife and sons still had jobs, a home to maintain and daily responsibilities that couldn’t wait. What made his journey possible was having world-class care available locally. “I don’t know that we could have done without it,” Mike reflects.

After three brain surgeries, he says he probably shouldn’t be here today, but he credits Carilion Clinic Neurosurgeon Cara Rogers, DO, and her team for his recovery. Now Mike is living proof that cancer care at Carilion saves lives, and he believes the Carilion Taubman Cancer Center is where cures will be found.

## PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT: CARA ROGERS, DO



Cara Rogers, DO

NEUROSURGICAL ONCOLOGY  
HYDROCEPHALUS  
TRAUMA/SURGICAL CRITICAL CARE

Cara Rogers, DO, and her team. Pictured left to right: Marlena Driscoll, APS (scheduler), Cara Marie Rogers, DO (neurosurgical oncologist), Beverly Monroe, RN (nurse) and Kelsey McWey, PA-C (physician assistant).

For Cara Rogers, DO, neurosurgical oncology is her specialty, and also her calling. She chose this field because brain and spinal cord tumors represent some of the most daunting diagnoses a patient can face. “Being able to support and guide my patients and their families through these journeys is one of the most meaningful things that I do,” says Rogers. “There is a unique and unparalleled bond that forms with my neurooncological patients, making it a great privilege to be part of their lives.”

Dr. Rogers trained at both Carilion and MD Anderson Cancer Center, gaining expertise in the most advanced neurosurgical techniques and technologies. That training shaped her patient-centered approach: creating an individualized plan that respects the patient’s goals and wishes. “I treat my patients like family,” she says. “That’s something my parents taught me, my mentors reinforced, and my team lives by every day.”

That personal approach leaves a lasting impact. Patient Mike Goforth recalls, “I am so thankful for Dr. Rogers and her team and the folks at Carilion. It was obvious I wasn’t alone in any of this – in the journey, in the fight. I wouldn’t be here today if it wasn’t for her and her team.”

Because neurosurgical oncology often requires difficult conversations, Dr. Rogers emphasizes transparency and clarity. “Neurooncological pathologies tend to strip people of their basic rights to feel in control of their health,” she explains. She

helps patients regain that power by explaining conditions in understandable language and presenting all treatment options with full transparency about benefits and risks. “This way they can make informed decisions that are in line with their own personal objectives.”

Staying at the forefront of research is another cornerstone of her work. Thanks to Carilion’s collaboration with key partners, she is part of a thriving community advancing neurooncological research and technology.

The new Carilion Taubman Cancer Center represents another step forward in bringing world-class care close to home. “Patient care and wellbeing is always superior when patients are surrounded by the love and support of their family and friends,” she explains. “Having a destination cancer center with all the world-class services, specialties and technologies available here in Roanoke, will be such an incredible benefit to our region.”

For patients facing a new diagnosis, Dr. Rogers offers this reassurance: “As scary as the diagnosis is, there is always hope, and there are always options, and we will be with them every step of the way through diagnosis, treatment, recovery and beyond.”

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