## Living out the Years

en years ago Sue Hepburn of Ravenna went for a routine mammogram ordered by her family doctor, William A. Raux, MD. The test detected cancer in her right breast, and a biopsy confirmed it. On Hepburn's road to recovery, she would have the mass removed by surgeon Randall H. Smith, MD, and undergo radiation treatment under the care of oncologist Mitchel L. Fromm, MD.

"It knocks you off your feet," Hepburn said. "And you know you would do anything to be cured."

Hepburn didn't know that 80 other women diagnosed at Robinson were also fighting breast cancer at the same time. And today, the hospital's tumor database concludes that 73 of those women – including Hepburn – are still alive. That 10-year survival rate is 12.1 percent higher than Ohio survival rates and nearly 11 percent higher than national survival rates.

"I think the numbers prove that

care's been just as good in a community hospital as elsewhere, and even better," surgeon Lynn Wojtasik, MD, said. "In stage three cancer, Robinson's numbers are significantly higher than the state and national averages – more than 20 percent higher in both cases."

Certified Tumor Registrar Karen Cipriano is responsible for reporting cancer cases to state and national databases.

"I can see how far we've come in the last 10 to 20 years," Cipriano said. "People want to know how long you can live with something like this, and Robinson's numbers are outstanding."

Comparable data shows that breast cancer patients diagnosed in 1988 and 1989 had 10-year survival rates ranging from 33.3 to 64.2 percent – a clear difference from the 92.5 percent survival reported in Robinson's current study. Early detection is the main reason survival rates are improving.

Robinson is also keeping tabs on how breast cancer is being treated. Ten years ago, only one woman had surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. But two years ago, 16 women had this combination.

"The trend is toward breast conservation instead of mastectomies," Dr. Wojtasik said. "So we're doing surgery to remove the mass and lymph nodes and then doing chemotherapy and radiation to supplement the surgery if needed."

If it's been a while since your last mammogram, Robinson Memorial Hospital offers three convenient locations.

**Aurora** 330-562-3169

Kent 330-297-2338

**Ravenna** 330-297-2338

## Robinson Memorial Hospital 10-year breast cancer survival rates

