



# Cancer Support Services

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for People in Tompkins County

(Updated January 2016)

Prepared by the

Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes

612 West State Street

Ithaca, NY 14850

607-277-0960

[www.crcfl.net](http://www.crcfl.net)



No one is prepared to hear the words, “You have cancer.” It’s like entering a world where you don’t understand the language or even know which questions to ask.

Everyone feels lost at first.

This guide is designed to help you identify potential resources. It provides the answers to the questions we are asked about most often here at the Cancer Resource Center.

We’d be happy to track down additional resources for you. Just give us a call.

Please contact us:

Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes

612 West State Street

Ithaca, NY 14850

607-277-0960 [info@crctl.net](mailto:info@crctl.net)



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## Table of Contents

### Support

Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes (CRCFL) .....	4
Cancer Support and Networking Groups .....	5
Advice for People Newly Diagnosed with Cancer .....	6

### Financial Assistance

Free Cancer Screenings .....	8
Financial Assistance .....	8
Help Paying for Medication .....	9
Help with Insurance and Legal Issues.....	9

### Wigs, Supplies, Equipment

Wigs, Turbans, Make-up.....	10
Breast Prostheses and Mastectomy Supplies .....	11
Beds, Wheelchairs, Other Equipment .....	11

### Specialized Services

Home Care .....	12
Nutritional Assistance.....	12
Pain Control .....	13
Mental Health Services.....	13
Lymphedema .....	14
Genetic Counseling.....	14
End of Life Care.....	15

### Special Populations

Young Adults and Cancer.....	16
Older Adults and Cancer.....	16

### Transportation

Local.....	17
Out of Town.....	17
Parking Permits.....	17

Index .....	18
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## The Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes

*...because no one should face cancer alone*



Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes  
612 West State Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
607-277-0960  
[www.crcfl.net](http://www.crcfl.net)

**One-to-One Support:** We recognize that every person and every cancer is different, so we begin by listening. Many people come to us when they are first diagnosed. Others come because they are concerned about a loved one with cancer. We answer questions, suggest resources, and share what we've learned from others who have come through our door.

**Groups:** People often come to us for information, but they stay because they find community. Newcomers are always welcome. See page 5 for a complete listing of our groups.

**Boutique:** We have new and gently used wigs, hats, scarves, and post-mastectomy supplies – all available free of charge.

**Wellness Activities:** We routinely offer classes and programs for people affected by cancer, including yoga, water exercise, retreats, and more.

**Our Funding:** We are a locally-based non-profit organization serving individuals in and around Tompkins County. We are not affiliated with, nor do we receive funding from, the American Cancer Society. We depend on the support of our community through donations and through events such as our annual Walkathon & 5K Run.

## Cancer Support and Networking Groups

*For the most up-to-date information about groups, call the Cancer Resource Center at 607-277-0960 or visit our [website](http://www.crcfl.net) (www.crcfl.net)*

**Men's Breakfast Club:** Meets every Friday from 8-9 am at the Royal Court Restaurant

**Women's Noon Group:** Meets every Friday from 12-1:30 pm at the Cancer Resource Center.

**Women's Evening Group:** Meets the First Tuesday from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at the Cancer Resource Center.

**Pat's Group: *Living with Cancer as a Chronic Disease*:** Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 12-1:30 pm. Lunch provided. For people with more advanced cancers. Caregivers welcome.

**Young Adult Group:** For people 20-40ish with cancer. Partners welcome. Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at the Cancer Resource Center. Supervised play for children is provided on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday. (Please RSVP to 277-0960 if bringing children).

**Caregiver Group:** Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at the Cancer Resource Center. Open to family, friends, and caregivers of those with cancer.

**Colorectal Group:** Meets the 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at the Cancer Resource Center.

**Living Well with Cancer Workshop** (co-sponsored by the Cancer Resource Center and Cayuga Medical Center): Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at the Cancer Resource Center. Speakers on a variety of topics related to cancer. Everyone is welcome.

Also of interest:

**Cancer Research Group:** Meets on Wednesday evenings from 5:15 - 6:45 pm in the Hagan Room at the Cornell Vet School. Join with Cornell doctoral students engaged in cancer research and those directly touched by cancer for a discussion about the science of cancer (presented in lay language). The public is welcome. Light refreshments provided. Please contact the Cancer Resource Center for the latest information.

**Gentle Yoga class:** Meets on Tuesdays 9:30-11:00 am at Island Health & Fitness. The class is taught by Nick Boyar and is offered free of charge to those with cancer.

**Affordable Acupuncture for People with Cancer:** Available at [Ithaca Community Acupuncture](#), 510 W. State St. Sliding scale \$15-\$35 + one-time \$10 new patient paperwork fee. To make an appointment, call 607-319-5454.

## Advice for People Newly Diagnosed with Cancer

Bob Riter  
bob@crcfl.net

The first few days following a cancer diagnosis are like riding on top of a speeding train. You're hanging on for dear life and can't quite see what's ahead. Although every situation is somewhat different, this is what I generally suggest:

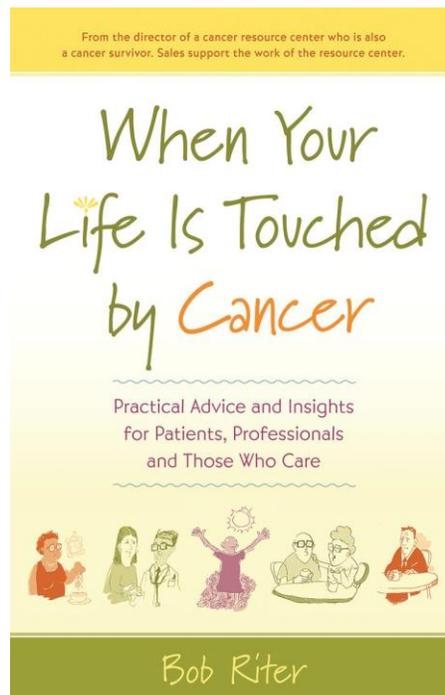
- Focus on one step at a time. If you are having a biopsy next week, focus on that biopsy and do not let your mind wander to what might happen next.
- Take someone with you to medical appointments. They can take notes and help you remember what was said.
- Do not hesitate to ask your doctor to repeat something.
- Family members, friends, and complete strangers will give you advice. Be wary when they say, "You *should* do..." Though well-intentioned, they may not know what is best for you.
- You control who to tell about your cancer diagnosis and when to tell them.
- Remember that cancer treatments change rapidly. What you hear from people who were treated in the past is out of date.
- Understand that cancer is not a single disease. Lung cancer and breast cancer are very different diseases. There are even 14 different types of breast cancer. What you hear about cancer in other people probably does not apply to your cancer.
- Survival statistics are averages. They can be helpful if you want a general idea of the prognosis for people with your disease, but they can't predict what will happen to you as an individual.
- Do not hesitate to get a second opinion if you think it might be helpful. Your doctor won't mind. (If your doctor does mind, you should get another doctor).
- A new cancer diagnosis is rarely a medical emergency. You generally have several days or even weeks to explore your options. (Some situations do require immediate attention - ask your doctor how long it is safe to wait before beginning treatment).
- Do not begin a radical "cancer curing" diet or major lifestyle changes before or during treatment. Just eat sensibly and nutritiously, exercise moderately, and get plenty of rest. You can make whatever lifestyle and diet changes you want after treatment is over.

- Nearly everyone undergoing cancer treatment experiences fatigue. It is probably the most common and least publicized side effect. Conserve your energy for activities that are most important to you.
- Nothing goes in a straight line. You will feel better one day; then you will feel worse; then you will feel better. Do not be discouraged by the down days.

Being diagnosed with cancer is life-changing for many and life-disruptive for nearly everyone. It is difficult at first, but once the decisions are made and treatment begins, most people gradually regain their rhythms. Cancer isn't fun, but treatment often ends up being more manageable than people expect. It's a club that no one wants to join, but trust me, you're in good company.

*Bob Riter is the Executive Director of the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes.*

*More of Bob's columns are available online at [www.crcfl.net](http://www.crcfl.net) or in his book, [When Your Life is Touched by Cancer: Practical Advice and Insights for Patients, Professionals, and Those Who Care](#) (©Hunter House Publishers, 2014)*



## Free Cancer Screenings

Through the [Cancer Services Program of Cortland and Tompkins Counties](#), individuals may qualify for free cancer screenings. If cancer is found, the individual may be eligible for treatment through the Medicaid Treatment Act.

Services provided:

- Colorectal cancer screenings for women and men 50 years and older
- Mammograms for women 40 and older
- Clinical breast exams for women 40 and older
- Pap/Pelvic Exams for women 40 and older

For more information, contact the Cortland County Health Department at 607-758-5523.

## Financial Assistance

### Local Resources

Trained volunteers from the Cancer Resource Center are available to assist individuals from in and around Tompkins County navigate their financial concerns related to a cancer diagnosis. We can help identify resources, organize paperwork, and advocate on a client's behalf. For assistance, call us at 607-277-0960.

[Ithaca Free Clinic](#) (607-330-1254, 521 W. Seneca St.) provides basic primary care and referrals to people without insurance on a first come, first served basis, Mon 2-6pm and Thurs 4-8pm. It also offers holistic and therapeutic services by appointment.

The [Small Comforts Foundation](#) (607-257-6059) provides small grants to improve the quality of life of Tompkins County residents with chronic illness.

[Leukemia and Lymphoma Society](#) (315-471-1050, 800-955-4572) provides financial reimbursement for some medications, transportation and procedures for people affected by leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, and other blood cancers.

[Samaritan Center of Catholic Charities](#) (607-272-5062, 324 West Buffalo St., Ithaca) provides referrals and assistance with emergency financial support to low income residents with urgent needs.

## Help Paying for Medication

The [ProAct Prescription Discount Card](#) is free and helps reduce the cost of prescription drugs. Present your card at a participating pharmacy and save an average of 20% on prescription drugs. Cards are available at local pharmacies or call 2-1-1 to have one mailed to you.

Many drug companies have patient assistance programs that help pay for cancer drugs. A clearinghouse for these programs is the [Partnership for Prescription Assistance](#) (888-477-2669).

[NeedyMeds](#) (800-503-6897) is an excellent source of information for help paying for drugs.

The [Co-Pay Relief Program of the Patient Advocate Foundation](#) (866-512-3861) provides some financial assistance for pharmaceutical products for insured Americans who qualify.



## Help with Insurance and Legal Issues

[Health Access Navigators](#) from the Human Service Coalition of Tompkins County can educate you about public and private health insurance options, financial assistance, and help you with enrollment through the Marketplace. Call 2-1-1 (or 877-211-8667) to make an appointment.

Workforce New York's Disability Program Navigator (607-272-7570, ext. 136) is an excellent resource for help with programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security Disability Insurance.

The [Health Care Bureau](#) of the New York State Attorney General's Office protects – and advocates – for the rights of consumers throughout the state. Its *Helpline* number is 800-428-9071.

The [Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program \(HIICAP\)](#) of Lifelong (607-273-1511) provides help with Medicare, Medigap, long-term care insurance, and other programs serving seniors.

[Cancer Legal Advocacy & Services Project](#), a project of Legal Services of Central New York, provides legal assistance to individuals and their families living with cancer in Central New York (including Tompkins County). For assistance, call 315-703-6500.

## Wigs, Turbans, Make-up

### Wigs

The [Boutique](#) at the Cancer Resource Center (612 West State St., Ithaca, NY, 607-277-0960) maintains an inventory of new and gently used wigs that are available free of charge.

Upper Level Hairstyling (512 W. State St., Ithaca, 607-273-1555). Lisa Camilli provides wigs free of charge and teaches individuals how to care for them.

[Hendricks and Wood Studios](#) (801 West Buffalo St. 607-257-7911). Erich Hendricks offers wig sales and service. The latter includes reshaping, recurling, custom coloring of human-hair wigs, and restyling.

Ithaca Beauty Supply (607-319-4738) at the Shops at Ithaca Mall has a wide selection of wigs.

[Paula Young](#) (800-364-9060) is a popular mail order supplier of wigs.



### Make-Up

The [Look Good...Feel Better](#) program is a community-based, free service that teaches women beauty techniques to help restore their appearance and self-image during chemotherapy and radiation treatments. The program is offered through the American Cancer Society. To register, call 800-227-2345.

[Norabloom](#) Botanicals and Beauty Lounge (607-592-8222; 132 E. State Street, Suite 201, Ithaca) specializes in a "loving chemical-free approach to women's skin health." Holly Green, owner and licensed esthetician, provides free consultations to women undergoing cancer treatment.

## Breast Prostheses and Mastectomy Supplies

The [Boutique](#) at the Cancer Resource Center (612 West State St., Ithaca, 607-277-0960) maintains an inventory of gently used prostheses, mastectomy bras, and related supplies that are available free of charge. No appointment is needed.

[Guthrie Med Supply Depot](#) (402 Third St., Ithaca, NY, 607-273-4727) carries breast prostheses and mastectomy bras. Call ahead for an appointment.

[The Confident Woman Boutique](#) (6 Euclid Ave., Cortland, NY, 607-753-6452) carries prostheses, bras, swimwear and other post-mastectomy products. Open by appointment.

[Lady Jane Boutique](#) (892 E Brighton Ave, Syracuse, NY 13205, (315) 498-9086). Carries a full line of Amoena products including Luxa Comfort and Affinity breast forms, Balancia shapers, Elegant Contours brassieres, and Comfy Straps silicone strap pads.

[Hangar Orthotics](#) (1300 College Avenue, Suite 1, Elmira, NY 14901, 607-734-7215). The Hangar office in Ithaca does not offer breast prostheses, but their office in Elmira does. (Hangar accepts EMPIRE insurance while Guthrie Med Supply and the Confident Woman do not). Call ahead for an appointment.

New Beginnings Health Care (104 Vanida Dr., Camillus, NY 315-487-2779) carries prostheses, bras, camisoles, bathing suits, and compression garments. Certified fitter. Call for an appointment.

[YWCA Pink Boutique](#) (211 Lake St., Elmira, NY, 607-733-5575) carries prostheses, bras, swimwear, and headwear. Call ahead for an appointment.

## Beds, Wheelchairs, and Other Equipment

[Finger Lakes Independence Center](#) (FLIC) (607-272-2433, 215 Fifth St., Ithaca) provides a "Please Try It" room that displays and loans a wide range of assistive devices including ramps, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.

[Wonderful Wheelchairs](#) is a volunteer organization in Ithaca that refurbishes and sells wheelchairs at very reasonable prices. For more information, call Carol John at 607-351-1655 or Monte May at 607-272-8224 or 607-592-4490.

Loan closets for wheelchairs, beds, etc. are maintained by the Trumansburg American Legion (607-387-4212), the Dryden Veterans' Memorial Home (607-844-9900), and the Groton American Legion (607-898-3837).

Medical equipment can also be purchased from Lincare, Kinney Drug, and other suppliers listed in the Yellow Pages under "Hospital Equipment and Supplies."

## Home Care

### Good Starting Points for Assessment and Advice

[NY Connects](#) (Tompkins County) is the “point of entry” for long-term care services in Tompkins County. NY Connects provides information, referral, assessment and case management at no cost to Tompkins County residents with long-term care needs. (607-274-5222)

[Family & Children's Services](#) (607-273-7494) provide caregiving counseling and geriatric case management.

If the illness is potentially life-limiting, it's often a good idea to talk with [Hospicare and Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County](#) (607-272-0212) to determine if hospice or palliative care is appropriate.

### Providers of Home Care Services

The [Finger Lakes Independence Center](#) (607-272-2433) offers a registry of individuals willing to serve as in-home caregivers.

Several private and public agencies provide home care in Tompkins County. Services offered and rates vary, so call for more information (all with a 607 area code):

<a href="#">CareGivers</a>	275-0238
<a href="#">Classen Home Health</a>	277-1342
<a href="#">Comfort Keepers</a>	272-0444
<a href="#">Redmoon Caregivers</a>	254-6090
<a href="#">Visiting Nurse Service of Ithaca and Tompkins County, Inc.</a>	273-0466

## Nutritional Assistance

Registered dietitians at the [Cayuga Center for Healthy Living](#) (607-252-3590) are available to provide consultations to anyone with cancer-related nutritional needs.

The [Oley Foundation](#) (800-776-6539) provides resources and information for people dependent on tube feeding or IV nutrition.

We sometimes have donated supplies of Jevity, Glucerna and Ensure and other items at the Cancer Resource Center. Please call us (607-277-0960) or visit our [website](#) for current availability.

If you require nutritional supplements, but have difficulty paying for them, you may qualify for assistance from the manufacturers of these products. A clearinghouse for these programs is the [Partnership for Prescription Assistance](#) (888-477-2669).

## Pain Control

Cancer pain should be addressed quickly and aggressively. The treating physician is the first contact, but other resources are available:

Palliative Care (a program of [Hospicare and Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County](#)). (607-272-0212)

Palliative care specializes in relieving the symptoms and stress of serious illness. Symptoms may be physical, emotional, or spiritual. The goal is to improve quality of life for you and your family. Palliative care may be appropriate at any point in an illness, from diagnosis on, and it can be provided at the same time as treatment that is meant to cure you.

Working in partnership with your primary doctor, the palliative care team can provide: recommendations for treatment of pain and other symptoms that are not responding to usual therapies; clear communication between you and your family; help in navigating the healthcare system; opportunities for extended discussions about goals and options; practical information about community resources; emotional and spiritual support for you and your family. Palliative care consultations can be done in your own home, in an assisted living facility, nursing home, or hospital.

## Mental Health Services

Depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns are common during cancer treatment and recovery.

You may have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through your place of employment. If so, that's often a good place to start. Check with your human resource department.

[Family and Children's Service of Ithaca](#) (607-273-7494) provides mental health services on a sliding scale, based on household income, in addition to serving those with private insurance, Medicare and Medicaid.

[The Mental Health Association in Tompkins County](#) (607-273-9250) is a good resource for information on mental health resources in our area, including a comprehensive list of private practitioners.

## Lymphedema

Lymphedema is a type of swelling in an arm, leg, or other body part that sometimes occurs after surgery and/or radiation for cancer.

Assessment and treatment are available through:

Department of [Physical Therapy at Cayuga Medical Center](#) (607-274-4159 or 607-252-3500).

Alana Myers, [The Myers Center](#), Vestal, NY (607-757-0517)

[Stephanie Gray](#) (607-351-6840) and [Jennifer Forte](#) (516-474-2918) are Licensed Massage Therapists in Ithaca who are also Certified Lymphedema Therapists.



## Genetic Counseling

The [Ferre Institute](#) (607-724-4308) is based in Binghamton, NY and provides genetic counseling services to individuals in our area.

## End of Life Care

Hospice is a philosophy of care for the dying and their families that affirms life but does not deny death. Support and care are provided in the last phase of a person's illness so that they may live as comfortably and autonomously as possible. Locally, our provider is [Hospicare](#) (607-272-0212).

Hospice services can be provided wherever the patient lives: at home, in skilled nursing facilities, adult homes, or at the Hospicare Residence on East King Road in Ithaca. Hospicare also provides service at Cayuga Medical Center.

Hospice is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance plans. Anyone can make a referral or receive information by calling 607-272-0212.

The [PATH Program](#) (Personal Attention to Health) assists individuals in navigating the medical, emotional, spiritual and logistical challenges associated with *any* serious illness. Call 607-272-0212 and ask for the PATH Program.



## Young Adults and Cancer

Cancer can be especially difficult for young adults because they're just establishing themselves in their relationships and their careers. Our Young Adult Group meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 at the Cancer Resource Center. Please call our office (277-0960) if you'd like to speak with a facilitator of the group to learn more.

[Stupid Cancer](#) provides age-appropriate resources and social networking for young adults with cancer.



The [Young Survival Coalition](#) (646-257-3000) focuses on the needs of young women with breast cancer.

## Older Adults and Cancer

Cancer becomes more common as people get older. When an older person undergoes cancer treatment, the support s/he needs may relate as much to aging as to the cancer itself.

[Tompkins County Office for the Aging](#) (607-274-5482) is an excellent resource for assistance with aging-related issues such as housing, home care, and more. It also offers a program for seniors who desire friendly visitors.

[Foodnet](#) (607-266-9553) is the local "Meals on Wheels" Program.

The [Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program \(HIICAP\)](#) of Lifelong (607-273-1511) provides help with Medicare, Medigap, long-term care insurance, and other programs serving seniors.

[Gadabout](#) (607-273-1878) provides door-to-door transportation for persons who are 60 and older and/or disabled.

## Transportation

### Local

[Gadabout](#) (607-273-1878) is a nonprofit, door-to-door service for people aged sixty or older and for disabled residents of Tompkins County. Service runs from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Ride reservations must be made in advance.

[Friends in Service Helping \(FISH\)](#) provides transportation within Tompkins County for elderly, handicapped, and low-income individuals. This is offered primarily for medical-related trips. Please call several days in advance. There is no charge, but donations are accepted. Call 2-1-1 or 877-211-8667 for eligibility and scheduling assistance.

Volunteers from the Cancer Resource Center (607-277-0960) or the American Cancer Society's [Road to Recovery Program](#) (800-ACS-2345) are sometimes available to take patients to treatment and appointments.

### Out of Town

The [Cornell Campus to Campus Bus](#) makes three round trips daily to New York City and is very convenient for visiting the Cornell Weill Medical Campus (New York Presbyterian Hospital) and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. If space is available, free seats may be obtained for cancer patients and a support person through the Cancer Resource Center (607-277-0960).



[Corporate Angel Network](#) (866-328-1313 or 914-328-1313) may help you get a free flight on a corporate airplane for treatment or a second opinion. Many people from our area have used this service, which often flies from the Elmira/Corning Airport to the New York City area.

Private pilots donate their time and fly patients going to points throughout the Northeast. Programs include [Angel Flight NE](#) (800-549-9980) and [Wings: Flights of Hope](#) (866-619-4647)

## Parking Permits

Parking Permits for individuals with temporary or permanent disabilities are issued through your local city, town, or village clerk's office (e.g., if you live in the City of Ithaca, you obtain the permit from the City Clerk's office, 108 E. Green St., Ithaca, NY 14850). The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) does NOT issue these permits.

## INDEX

Acupuncture, 5

American Cancer Society, 10, 17

Angel Flight NE, 17

Beds, 11

Boutique, 4, 10, 11

Breakfast Club, 5

Breast Prostheses, 11

Cancer Legal Advocacy & Services, 9

Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes,  
1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 17

Cancer Screenings, 8

Cancer Services Program, 8

Caregiver Group, 5

CareGivers, 12

Catholic Charities, 8

Cayuga Center for Healthy Living, 12

Cayuga Medical Center, 5, 14, 15

Classen Home Health, 12

Colorectal Group, 5

Comfort Keepers, 12

Confident Woman, 11

Co-Pay Relief Program, 9

Cornell Campus to Campus Bus, 17

Corporate Angel Network, 17

Disability Program Navigator, 9

Family & Children's Services, 12

Family and Children's Service of Ithaca, 13

Ferre Institute, 14

Financial Assistance, 8

Finger Lakes Independence Center, 11, 12

FISH, 17

Foodnet, 16

Forte, Jennifer, 14

Friendly visitors, 16

Gadabout, 16, 17

Genetic Counseling, 14

Gray, Stephanie, 14

Groups, 4, 5

Guthrie Med Supply Depot, 11

Hangar Orthotics, 11

Hendricks and Wood Studios, 10

Home Care, 12

Hospicare, 12, 13, 15

Insurance, 9, 16

Ithaca Beauty Supply, 10

Ithaca Community Acupuncture, 5

Ithaca Free Clinic, 8

Jevity, 12

Kinney Drug, 11

Lady Jane Boutique, 11  
 Legal Advocacy, 9  
 Legal Issues, 9  
 Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, 8  
 Lifelong, 16  
 Lincare, 11  
 Living Well with Cancer, 5  
 Loan closets, 11  
*Look Good...Feel Better*, 10  
 Lymphedema, 14  
 Mammograms, 8  
 Mastectomy Supplies, 11  
 Meals on Wheels, 16  
 Medical equipment, 11  
 Medication, 9  
 Men's Breakfast Club, 5  
 Mental Health, 13  
 Mental Health Association in Tompkins  
 County, 13  
 Myers Center, 14  
 Myers, Alana, 14  
 NeedyMeds, 9  
 New York State Attorney General's Office, 9  
 Newly Diagnosed, 6  
 NoraBloom, 10  
 Nutritional supplements, 12  
 NY Connects, 12  
 Office for the Aging, 16  
 Older Adults, 16  
 Oley Foundation, 12  
 Pain Control, 13  
 Palliative Care, 12, 13  
 Parking Permits, 17  
 Partnership for Prescription Assistance, 9,  
 12  
 PATH Program, 15  
 Patient Advocate Foundation, 9  
 Pat's Group, 5  
 Paula Young, 10  
 ProAct Prescription Discount Card, 9  
 Protheses, 11  
 Redmoon Caregivers, 12  
 Research Group, 5  
 Road to Recovery Program, 17  
 Samaritan Center, 8  
 Screenings, 8  
 Small Comforts Foundation, 8  
 Stupid Cancer, 16  
 Support and Networking Groups, 5  
 Transportation, 17  
 Upper Level Hairstyling, 10  
 Visiting Nurse Service, 12

Walkathon & 5K Run, 4

Wheelchairs, 11

Wigs, 10

Wings: Flights of Hope, 17

Women's Evening Group, 5

Women's Noon Group, 5

Wonderful Wheelchairs, 11

Yoga, 5

Young Adult Group, 5

Young Adults, 16

Young Survival Coalition, 16

YWCA, 11

An excellent source for additional information is the 211Tompkins/Cortland Helpline at 2-1-1 or 1-877-211-8667.