

## Tailored Approach

Researcher fine tunes study of cancer recovery and fitness

**D**R. ANDREW HATCHETT, AN ASSISTANT professor of kinesiology, is working with people recovering from cancer to see how they may benefit from exercise.

“Published research on fitness and cancer recovery has only been available for about 30 years. Compared with cardiac rehabilitation, cancer rehab is a relatively new area of study,” he said in a recent interview.

Research generally suggests that physical activity is beneficial, according to Hatchett. He’s looking more closely at the connection between working out and getting well by focusing on individual patients.

“Cancer is not a cookie-cutter disease. You may have two patients with the same type of cancer, receiving the same treatment, who will have totally different reactions to the treatment. So, it’s difficult to identify standardized measurements in rehabilitation,” he said.

Hatchett is working to make research-based rehabilitation programs



Dr. Andrew Hatchett

more widely available to oncologists and their patients. He has partnered with the Miles Perret Cancer Center, a Lafayette non-profit agency that provides free support services to cancer patients and their families. The center was established in 2002 by Hank and Debbie

Perret and is named for their 8-year-old son, who died in 1996 after being diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor.

In 2008, Hatchett and Carla Duhon, the center’s wellness director, created Miles Strong, a 10-week rehabilitation program focusing on exercise and nutrition.

Duhon, a clinical exercise physiologist with a certification in cancer and exercise, leads the workout sessions. Held twice a week, the sessions are designed to increase strength and flexibility, and to educate patients about overall health, nutrition and fitness.

Judy Arabie was diagnosed with breast cancer in July 2009. Four weeks after a mastectomy, Arabie’s doctors gave her permission to begin the Miles Strong program. “I was very fortunate. I had full range of motion in my arm. My goal was to start bowling again,” she said.

Arabie completed the Miles Strong program and has returned to her favorite sport. “Some days, it’s a huge goal just to walk from one side of the room to the other. If you’ve never gone through it, it’s hard to understand how difficult it can be and how important it is to have support and encouragement,” she said.

Each Miles Strong session is limited to four participants, so they may receive personalized attention. Duhon collects clinical data by monitoring the heart rate, oxygen levels and blood pressure of patients during their workouts. She also tracks patients’ progress over the course of the program.

Hatchett follows up with participants via e-mail to reinforce what they learn at the Center. “Published research shows that regular exercise can speed recovery for cancer patients. The ultimate goal is for patients who have participated in this program to remain active,” he said. ■



Shown at the Miles Perret Cancer Center, from left, are: Patsy Von Hoosen, Joni Hill and Crystal Anderson, patients; Travis Tolbert, a cancer exercise specialist; Dr. Andrew Hatchett, an assistant professor of kinesiology; and Carla Duhon, the center’s wellness director.