Cancer Health 25: Ann Partridge, MD, MPH

Her research and clinical care for people diagnosed with breast cancer is a model for cancer survivorship for anyone with any cancer.

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The Cancer Health 25 is an annual list that honors individuals who have made a difference in the lives of people with cancer. This year's theme is quality of life. To see the full list, click here.

Ann Partridge, MD, MPH, 52, the vice chair of medical oncology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston and a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, has dedicated her career to helping people diagnosed with breast cancer experience the best possible quality of life during treatment and for the rest of her lives. She is a leader in the growing field of cancer survivorship.

In 2005, Partridge cofounded the Young and Strong Program for Adults with Breast Cancer (formerly the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer) at Dana-Farber, which has helped guide more than 6,200 young adults through cancer and to survivorship. The program provides participants with the comprehensive care, support and education they need to survive a diagnosis.

Partridge is the lead investigator for the Young Women's Breast Cancer Study. Launched in 2006, it has enrolled more than 1,300 women ages 40 and under. The study tracks both the medical and

psychosocial issues patients face at diagnosis, during treatment and into survivorship, including fertility concerns, sexual function, body image and genetic testing.

Her research also focuses on risk perceptions, age and race disparities in breast cancer outcomes and the behavioral aspects of cancer care, such as adherence to therapy.

As director of the Adult Survivorship Program at Dana-Farber, Partridge leads a team that works to enhance care and programming for survivors of all cancer types. The goal is to help this population manage the risk of second cancers, understand long-term treatment effects and address a range of social, physical and psychological concerns.

Her work has been recognized nationally. She received a Champions of Change award from the White House in 2011, and in 2018, she was honored as the American Association for Cancer Research's outstanding investigator for breast cancer research.

"I think survivorship is often neglected," Partridge told Cancer Health in a 2019 interview. "Patients are focused on treating the cancer and the risk of cancer coming back. We need to empower people to ask about survivorship, to think about what we can provide and to get them as much care as they need. For many people, the bulk of the time following a cancer diagnosis will be spent as a survivor."

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