

This is the tenth newsletter in a series of ONCORG Community Conversations. They're focused on relationships between doctors and patients, and the complexity of treating cancer.

Early June 2026 – Laura Cooper and her Multi-Disciplinary Team.



Rodney Thomas is a senior officer working for ONCORG, INC, headquartered in Mt. Laurel, NJ. ONCORG was developed as a comprehensive cancer support service for those seeking a first or second opinion for their cancer.

Mr. Thomas is a military veteran who served eight years in the USAF. He also spent eleven years in the automotive industry, ten years in healthcare and eight years with Apple Inc. supporting customer needs.

Laura Cooper's survivorship was our topic in our previous ONCORG article. After twenty years of battling cancer, Laura continues her overwhelming fight. She has survived Stage 3c Ovarian Cancer, spinal metastasis, triple negative breast cancer and pancreatic cancer.

To survive she's had over 18 surgeries, many rounds of chemotherapy and numerous side effects. The aforementioned treatments have had far-reaching long-lasting impact on her skeleton and oral cavity. Her natural bone remodeling process and healthy cellular balance has been disrupted. Everything hurts. She lives with severe pain, weakness and a permanent loss of mobility.

She does not take her health for granted, and she remains deeply grateful for the exceptional multidisciplinary team at Cooper Health System that has helped her along the way.

Laura attributes most of her survivorship to Dr. Generosa Grana, MD and FACP. Dr. Grana is a key medical leader at Cooper University Hospital located in Camden, NJ. She is well known for her compassionate care of her patients and the relationships she has fostered during their survivorships.

In medicine, the title of FACP is earned by a medical professional to signify their professional standing, excellence as a clinician and devotion to the patients. For Laura there is no limit to her gratitude to Dr. Grana and Cooper Health. In addition, she has the greatest of appreciation for Dr. Morrison and Dr. Hong for teaming up to treat her pancreatic cancer at Cooper.

When Laura was diagnosed with spinal metastasis, a prominent Pennsylvania health system told her to "make her final plans." Refusing to accept that prognosis, a good friend Dr. Kris Brill of Jefferson University hospital suggested she go to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, where the specialized expertise her condition required (by Dr. Patrick Boland) was available. With a touch of humor, Dr. Grana remarked, "When you do something, you do it big." She was right, because that surgery would be one of the most challenging procedures anyone could face.

Cooper University Health Care partnered with the renowned University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in 2013 to create MD Andersen Cancer Center at Cooper.

This was a much-needed collaboration for Southern New Jersey, because it brought highly approved cancer care, protocols, reputation and clinical trials directly to South Jersey and the Jersey Shore region. This is a big deal, because patients like Laura who live in South Jersey have access to the best cancer care in the world without having to travel to a major city for treatment.

Laura's health continues to be a daily fight. She walks with a limp, her blood count is continuously monitored and she has some kidney damage. Without too much detail, her T cells struggle to destroy cancer cells. As an FYI, T cells act as a frontline soldier naturally designed to destroy cancer cells, but cancer cells can exhaust them. Today modern medicine focus on boosting or training T cells to fight cancer. In simple terms Laura must periodically deal with this challenge. She is grateful for the many gifted hands that cared for her.

She has lots of pride. Since the beginning of her cancer, she has dealt with mounting financial struggles. She is not able to work like she did and now she provides home health care for a fee to those in need. This is exhausting work. She worries how long her health will last and how long she can continue working. She is exploring financial options. She appreciates everything her friends and family have done for her, but it does not feel right to ask for more.

One third of her life has been characterized as extraordinary resilience, transforming the disease from a temporary crisis into a lifelong framework of survival. For her, it's a unique physical and psychological journey, defined by profound strength and a redefined perspective on time, identity, family, relationships and healing.

She embodies the power of a never-give-up spirit. With quiet courage and unwavering determination, she confronts each day like a warrior, looking into the darkness and insisting that it will not define her future.

Yes Laura, as a military veteran, I salute your courage.

Rodney Thomas
ONCORG – Chief Communication Officer