

[MUSIC PLAYING]

My name is Jennifer Sipos. I'm an endocrinologist at The Ohio State University. I focus on disorders of thyroid anatomy, including thyroid nodules and thyroid cancer. The Thyroid Neoplasia Clinic at Ohio State is truly a unique place. We have a clinic that is dedicated to evaluating, treating patients with thyroid nodules and thyroid cancer.

We have a group of specialists who focus on these disorders, and we can evaluate the patient with a comprehensive neck ultrasound, perform a fine needle aspiration of any nodules or suspicious lymph nodes as appropriate, and then send the patient on for further evaluation of consideration of surgery or oncologic care by a specialized oncologist.

One of the areas of particular interest at Ohio State University as it pertains to thyroid cancer has been understanding the genetics of this disease. And this has been well recognized as being a genetic condition, and that many patients can inherit this disease, but the understanding the gene or genes that lead to the development of that cancer has been elusive. One of our researchers, Dr. de la Chapelle, has spent a great deal of time really trying to understand those patterns of inheritance and has discovered, in a couple of families, the genes that have led to the development of thyroid cancer in these families. And that has truly transformed the lives of these families in enabling us to predict who's at risk for the development of thyroid cancer.

And his group of scientists are continually searching for other genes to identify the causative factors for other families with thyroid cancers. We think that it's really important that all people involved in the care of the patients are able to be together in a single environment to be able to communicate freely about our patients and determine what the best treatment option is. So with that clinic, this multidisciplinary clinic, we have endocrinologists working alongside surgeons with a focus on thyroid disorders, and then oncologists who also focus on refractory thyroid cancers that require additional treatment beyond the usual surgery and radioactive iodine. They see patients who need clinical trials or may need a systemic therapy for the management of their aggressive thyroid cancers.

As a clinician, it's wonderful to be able to just walk down the hall and talk to the surgeon about whether or not they think it would be appropriate for the patient to have surgery. Rather than having to have the patient wait to find out that result, we can get that answer real time. From the patient's perspective, it's truly a wonderful opportunity because they can get all the answers they need in one clinic visit.

Our patients are busy. They have jobs and lives they have to get to, and to have to make multiple appointments is really challenging oftentimes. And as a clinician, it's really nice to be able to give the patient a concrete treatment plan and a strategy going forward to manage their disease. Because thyroid cancer is such an evolving field, the research component is truly critical to determining what the best next steps are for managing patients with thyroid nodules and cancer.

And we've done a number of studies over the years in our clinic space, including clinical trials for four cancers that have been traditionally very challenging to treat. And some of those clinical trials have led to FDA approval for drugs in a space where, just a few years ago, we didn't have any drugs available, and now we have a number of drugs that are available for use in patients with more aggressive disease.

We have several providers here who are involved in the drafting of guidelines for the management of patients with thyroid nodules and patients with thyroid cancer. So we're continually pushing that envelope and trying to find more and better treatments for these patients. And to be able to utilize that in conjunction with our clinical care has truly transformed the lives of many, many patients. And it's truly been a privilege to be a part of that.