In December 2008, Mark Giacona, 58, thought he had a chest cold, not uncommon for that time of year. But that was until he started coughing up blood.

“I just wanted to get through the holidays before going to the doctor,” Mark says. “I didn’t want to worry my wife or my family.”

But just a few days after Christmas, he woke up feeling dizzy, and it only got worse. On December 29, he finally went to the emergency department at Riverview Medical Center, where doctors ordered a chest X-ray.

“It turned out I had lung cancer and pneumonia,” Mark says. A bronchoscopy, in which a fiber-optic scope was placed through his nose and into the airway to collect tissue samples, revealed that he had a malignant tumor in his right lung.

“As far as cancers go, Mark was very lucky,” says Lourens Willekes, M.D., a board certified thoracic surgeon at Riverview. “Most people do not have any symptoms until their lung cancer is advanced, but Mark’s was caught early.”

Plus, he adds, 70 percent of lung cancers are inoperable because the cancer has spread to other places in the body. Surgery is not beneficial for those patients. Fortunately for Mark, surgery was an option, even though his cancer was in a somewhat difficult location. So, on January 6, 2009, Dr. Willekes

There’s nothing subpar about the team-focused care Mark Giacona experienced at Riverview Medical Center when he was diagnosed with lung cancer. The Lung Team caught the cancer early and worked together to develop the right treatment for him.

Breathe easier.
Introducing the comprehensive Lung Center at Riverview Medical Center.

Recent developments in diagnosing and treating diseases of the lung have given many patients new hope. At the comprehensive Lung Center at Riverview you’ll find a coordinated and advanced approach to treating lung disease and lung cancer. From the ability to diagnose at an earlier stage by utilizing SuperDimension, to a wide-range of treatment options including surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, clinical trials, and the CyberKnife® System, to a leading team of multi-disciplinary expert physicians to develop your treatment plan, you can breathe easier knowing you’re at Riverview Medical Center.

To learn more, call 1-800-DOCTORS® or visit www.RiverviewMedicalCenter.com/LungCenter
performed a nine-hour operation to remove the tumor. He also removed 42 lymph nodes to check if the cancer had spread. Because of one questionable lymph node, doctors treated Mark with chemotherapy.

**A TEAM APPROACH TO LUNG CANCER**

“Cancer is a scary thing,” Mark says. “If I never have to experience it again, that would be great. But, if I ever have to do it again, I hope for the same experience with this group of doctors.”

The group of doctors he is referring to is known as Riverview’s Lung Team and includes pulmonologists, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, thoracic surgeons, and often the patient’s primary care physician.

“The Lung Team brings together all of us dealing with lung cancer patients in a multi-disciplinary fashion to determine what course of treatment will give the patient the best outcome,” Dr. Willekes says. Although they meet in person once a month, members of the Lung Team often speak with each other on the phone at least once a day to discuss specific cases.

“This approach truly benefits the patients,” explains Ken Laughinghouse, M.D., one of Mark’s doctors and a board certified medical oncologist affiliated with the Lung Team. “The meetings and close collaboration among the Lung Team physicians allow us to coordinate multiple appointments and tests in a short period of time and begin treatment as quickly as possible. That’s what it’s all about — giving our patients the best care.”

**HIGH-TECH TREATMENT OPTIONS**

The Lung Team is part of the comprehensive Lung Center at Riverview.

“The comprehensive Lung Center is a model of caring for lung cancer patients and those with diseases of the lung, chest wall, and area between the lungs that involves not only physician expertise, but also technical expertise,” Dr. Willekes says.

It currently features technologies such as CyberKnife® (see sidebar) and the superDimension inReach™ System, a more sophisticated form of bronchoscopy that uses a patient’s CT scan to create a computerized 3-D road map of the patient’s lungs.

“This procedure allows us to navigate farther out to reach nodules on or near the outside of the lung, where conventional bronchoscopy might not be able to reach,” Dr. Willekes says. “For patients with peripheral lesions, superDimension helps us do better biopsies and sometimes make a diagnosis earlier, which can be lifesaving.”

Mark is thankful for the technology he had access to at Riverview, and his Lung Team, including pulmonologist Frank Arlinghaus, M.D. Today, Mark is back to work full time, and there are no signs of cancer in his body. “I feel as if I hit the jackpot with the doctors at Riverview,” he says.

**ABOUT the DOCTORS**

**Kenneth A. Laughinghouse, M.D.**

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**CYBERKNIFE® LEADS THE WAY IN LUNG CANCER TREATMENT**

The CyberKnife Robotic Radiosurgery System, one of the technologies offered at the comprehensive Lung Center at Riverview Medical Center, is a highly sophisticated way of delivering radiation to patients who need it.

“Conventional radiation therapy targets regions of the body, so in addition to getting the tumor, it can damage normal, healthy tissue in that area,” explains Adnan Danish, M.D., medical director of the CyberKnife Radiosurgery Program affiliated with the Lung Team. “As a result, we often use a lower dose of radiation than may be necessary to fully eradicate the tumor to decrease the risk of complications. But this can also reduce our chances of curing the disease.”

CyberKnife homes in on the tumor, even accounting for the patient’s movements, including breathing, to target only the tumor with radiation. This means high doses of radiation can be delivered safely and precisely.

CyberKnife is also an option for patients who may have cancer somewhere else in their bodies that has spread to the lungs, Dr. Danish says. And while traditional radiation may require 35 or more sessions, patients need just three to five visits when receiving radiation via the CyberKnife.

**ABOUT the DOCTOR**

**Adnan F. Danish, M.D.**

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A Special Delivery

Stay tuned in early January for a very special announcement from the entire Riverview Medical Center family. Visit RiverviewMedicalCenter.com to find out what we are “expecting”!