



Vitruvian Health

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INFORMATION

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Hope, healing, knowing your body

DALTON, Ga. (October 1, 2025) – Taking no chances after a stage 0 cancer diagnosis (earliest detectable stage of cancer) in 2014, Laura Orr got mammograms strictly on schedule. For 10 years, the results came back clear.

In June 2024, just months after her last mammogram, everything changed. During a breast self-exam, the Dalton resident and retired educator felt a lump. Puzzled, she questioned whether it might be only a cyst. But rather than ignore it, she followed up with her physician, who ordered another mammogram at [Peoples Cancer Institute](#) (PCI) at Hamilton Medical Center, part of Vitruvian Health.

The tests confirmed she had cancer – and the tumor was growing fast.

Orr is among the estimated one in eight women who will receive a breast cancer diagnosis in their lifetimes.

According to the American Cancer Society's [Breast Cancer Facts and Figures 2024-2025](#), while the number of cases has increased in recent years, "The breast cancer death rate has dropped by 44 percent since 1989 because of advances in treatment and earlier detection."

The bottom line – early detection saves lives.

"Definitely get your mammogram annually. Do your self-exams. Know your body," Orr said. "At first, I thought, 'Am I really feeling something, or am I not?' I had a couple of fluid-filled cysts before, and I thought, 'That kind of feels like that.'"

For six months, Orr took a chemotherapy pill to shrink the tumor. Her care team initially planned to follow up with just radiation and a lumpectomy – a type of surgery that removes only a portion of the breast. But a team review highlighted the seriousness of her stage 3 cancer and charted a different course.

“The tumor board at Peebles felt like I needed a mastectomy and then chemo so there were no stray cells lurking around,” Orr said.

Orr underwent surgery in April at Hamilton Medical Center followed by chemo treatments beginning in May. This fall, she’s happy to report a clear scan showing no signs of cancer. She continues radiation treatment and will follow up with two years of oral chemotherapy and five years of oral hormone blocking medication.

A retired Dalton Public Schools educator – including roles as a teacher, principal and assistant superintendent – Orr said she appreciates a straightforward, streamlined approach and the efficiency of having her entire care team within the same system.

“I just love the idea of all the doctors being in the network together,” Orr said. “We have the MyChart app that allows me to view all of my medical information in one place, and Peebles has been a good choice. I don’t think I’ve seen anybody who works there appearing to have a bad day. Everyone is well-trained and efficient.”

PCI offers breakthrough care – including phase three clinical trials – delivered by board-certified medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and surgeons. Orr said she’s especially encouraged by ongoing national research, which brings hope through new treatments and protocols. She also said the chemo pill she will take following radiation has been available only for the last two years.

“I’m just so proud that Dalton has such a robust medical community,” Orr said. “I don’t know of any community our size that has what we have.”

Orr encourages anyone facing a diagnosis to keep hope.

“A lot of times, you’re stronger than you think you are,” Orr said.

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Photo: Laura Orr

About Hamilton Medical Center

The flagship affiliate for Vitruvian Health’s Northwest Georgia region, Hamilton Medical Center (HMC) is a 255-bed regional acute-care hospital that offers major medical, surgical and diagnostic services, including accredited stroke and chest pain centers. Advanced technology and wellness are two significant areas of focus for HMC. Services include the freestanding Hamilton Ambulatory Surgery

Center, Hamilton Diagnostics Center, and Bradley Wellness Center, as well as a Level II trauma center, Peebles Cancer Institute, Heart & Vascular program (including open heart surgery), Hamilton Spine Health and Sport, Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and more.

About Vitruvian Health

Vitruvian Health, formerly Hamilton Health Care System, is a not-for-profit, fully integrated health system serving the Northwest Georgia and Southeast Tennessee regions. Vitruvian includes Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton, Ga., and Bradley Medical Center in Cleveland, Tenn., affiliated physician practices, walk-in care centers, retirement and skilled nursing centers, a diagnostic center, a cancer institute, an institute for children with developmental delays, and more. Known for its advanced care and personalized service, Vitruvian Health offers innovative treatment options in state-of-the-art facilities while maintaining a compassionate, friendly and tranquil healing environment.

The Vitruvian name draws from the organization's recognizable da Vinci-inspired Vitruvian Man icon, which has been a prominent part of Hamilton's logo since 1976. Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man represents harmony, balance, and the interconnectedness of all aspects of health, perfectly aligning with Hamilton's integrated system of care.