

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's Health and Wellness show, where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson, your host and my guest today is Dr. Sahin.

He is a new oncologist, joining our Cancer Care and Research Center. And joining us today to introduce himself to you, our listeners and our community. Good morning, Dr. Sahin.

Dr. Sahin: Good morning.

Katie Johnson: We are so excited to welcome you to the team at Lake Region Healthcare's Cancer Care and Research Center. I'd like to, like I said, introduce you to our community and maybe start with your background. What has your medical career looked like up until joining us here at Lake Region Healthcare?

Dr. Sahin: I'm originally from Turkey. I went to medical school there. Then about 30 years ago, I came to United States for additional training, including my residency at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, as well as Hematology. That's blood specialty training.

Then I moved to University of Minnesota for Medical Oncology training, as well as some Bone Marrow Transplantation Training. Afterwards, I ended up staying at the University of Minnesota, initially as a researcher.

I did basic laboratory research on liver STEM cells as well as cancer STEM cells. Subsequently, I became faculty, as medical staff. Then about five years ago for personal reasons, I decided to leave the University.

I was in a private practice in Rapid City, South Dakota, and again, for personal reasons, I decided to come back to Minnesota where I'm very, very happy.

Katie Johnson: Well, we're certainly fortunate that you chose Lake Region Healthcare and Fergus Falls for your move back to Minnesota. And I'm interested to learn, coming from the University of Minnesota and then some private practice, you obviously have a lot of interest in the research side of it. But what was it that really inspired you to pursue medicine and oncology and hematology, particularly?

Dr. Sahin: Medicine is something, probably every child wants to go into, as they grow up. But I pursued it, I suppose.

Katie Johnson: Yeah.

Dr. Sahin: And the oncology is primarily because of the fact that I knew, even when I was a medical student that eventually it was going to be a big health problem.

Perhaps, it would have been a bigger problem than cardiovascular disease. And I knew that there would be need for medical oncologists. So I was right.

Katie Johnson: You were right.

Dr. Sahin: And so I'm very pleased that I chose it and no regrets.

Katie Johnson: That's good to hear. How about choosing Lake Region Healthcare? Like you said, you wanted to come back to Minnesota. What was it about Fergus Falls or about this Cancer Center that particularly interested you?

Dr. Sahin: Primarily, it is in Minnesota. I like Minnesotans. Like I said, I stayed here for a long time. When I decided to relocate, I looked at various options, East Coast, West Coast. But at the end for personal reasons, and the fact that I like people of Minnesota, I decided to come here.

Katie Johnson: Well Minnesotans are a special type, aren't we?

Dr. Sahin: Yes, they are.

Katie Johnson: As you can tell, our Cancer Center is a pretty special place. We'll be celebrating 10 years of the Cancer Center serving this community, soon. And the the story behind it is pretty remarkable. Tell me what your experience has been like so far, meeting the team and getting to know the team, and how you're feeling about joining the group there?

Dr. Sahin: It's been absolutely positive. I'm very, very excited and like I said, I'm happy to be here in Minnesota. And on top of that I've been very impressed with the level of enthusiasm and the excitement. And it's also very surprising to see such a level of cancer care in such a small place.

Katie Johnson: It is.

Dr. Sahin: It's very impressive.

Katie Johnson: That's good to hear from an outside perspective. We do feel very fortunate. When you talk about caring for the cancer patient, tell me what's important to you. What constitutes very high quality cancer care in your mind as a physician?

Dr. Sahin: First of all, like everything else in medicine, cause no harm. That's the principle. So, while I do my best to treat cancer patients, I'm also mindful of the fact that I shouldn't cause any harm.

Cancer, especially in that we use chemotherapy. These are essentially toxic drugs.

Katie Johnson: Right.

Dr. Sahin: So you have to be very, very careful. Make sure that always at every step the benefits exceed the harms.

Katie Johnson: That is a fine balance or a line to balance in cancer care. I'm curious about your philosophy with cancer care too. I think something, it's true of any disease perhaps, but it feels more a part of the journey with cancer including the family and the caregivers and how you are able to help them along the cancer journey, as well.

Dr. Sahin: I think the most important thing is to be honest about the situation, about the prognosis treatment options, and be completely transparent. And give them options, make recommendations, not necessarily push a certain type of treatment on patients. Just in other words, make them part of the team.

Katie Johnson: That team decision making process is really powerful. What is it that you find you like most about being an oncologist?

Dr. Sahin: Well it's particularly gratifying when you cure somebody. Examples, early stage breast cancers or colon cancer in some cases of cancer. But recently with the immunotherapy, there've been instances of cure even in late stage cancers such as melanoma or even lung cancer. So, seeing somebody cured is very good to find.

Katie Johnson: I'm sure. If you were to complete the sentence, "If my patients really knew me, they would know what?" How would you finish that?

Dr. Sahin: I would say that I treat them as if they were a member of my family. I'm a hundred percent honest.

Katie Johnson: I can see you're going to fit with the team very well. I think there are many of our providers who would say the same thing. How about when you're not working, what is it that you enjoy doing in your free time?

Dr. Sahin: Well in my free time, I like to read, medical, nonmedical. I spent quite a bit time keeping up with latest developments in cancer treatment. But I also read history and geography. I do oil painting and I listen to classical music.

Katie Johnson: Very nice. Maybe we'll have to commission some oil paintings from you for our facility.

Dr. Sahin: I'm not a professional.

Katie Johnson: Well, I certainly enjoyed getting to know you better, Dr. Sahin. And we welcome you to Lake Region Healthcare, back to Minnesota and specifically to Fergus Falls into our Cancer Care and Research center.

I know that our patients and our staff are going to be delighted to have you as part of the team at the Cancer Center. And thanks for taking time to join us this morning, as well.

Dr. Sahin: Thank you. I'm very, very happy to be here.

Katie Johnson: Dr Sahin, the newest oncologist at Lake Region Healthcare's Cancer Care and Research Center, my guest this morning on Apple a Day. We welcome him to the Cancer Center and look forward to having him as part of our world-class cancer care team here in Fergus Falls.

Anything else you'd like our listeners to know about your practice this morning, Dr. Sahin?

Dr. Sahin: Well, I hope, first of all, that they won't get cancer to be my patients.

Katie Johnson: Right.

Dr. Sahin: That's the first wish. But if they do, I would do my best to take care of them.

Katie Johnson: Wonderful. We again look forward to having you as part of the team here, Dr. Sahin. And Katie Johnson on Apple a Day this morning, reminding you there's so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.