Having a serious illness is frightening. It’s painful and mentally devastating. Worse, it’s often accompanied by periods of depression and loneliness, those malevolent co-conspirators of serious or terminal illness.

That’s what “Colors of Hope” intends to address. By brightening hospital walls with art work that restores the spirit, organizers believe the program will promote significant improvement in patient care and attitude.

Under the project, co-sponsored by South Jersey Healthcare, The Noyes Museum of Art of Richard Stockton College and the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission, 20 works of art by respected local artists will be displayed at the Frank and Edith Scarpa Regional Cancer Pavilion at the South Jersey Healthcare Regional Medical Center.

Following the model of the nation-wide “Arts in Healthcare” program, “Colors of Hope” will link the expressive arts with the healing arts to promote the well-being of those who are ill and their caregivers.

“The program has a proven track record,” says Matthew Pisarski, Principal Planner for the Cultural & Heritage Commission. “The arts benefit patients by aiding in their physical, mental and emotional recovery. They can relieve some of the anxiety associated with their illness and reduce the perception of pain.”

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SJH launches art project for Cancer Center

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He explains the philosophy of the Arts in Healthcare program: that the physical environment—architecture, art on the walls, natural lighting and the inclusion of nature through landscape and gardens—has an impact on reducing patient and caregiver stress, improving health outcomes and overall quality of care.

With these goals in mind, organizers are inviting local artists to submit their works for consideration. Original art (oils, watercolor, acrylic), graphic art, photography, multi-media and mixed media art are all acceptable. Selected artists will receive $300 for their work, in addition to having it displayed at the Cancer Pavilion. Applications are available on the Commission web site (ccculturalheritage.org). Deadline for applying is March 1.

Applicants must make their submissions compatible with the “goals and guiding principles” of the project’s mission statement—“to provide positive distraction, choice, comfort and beauty to patients, families and staff at a critical time in their lives.”

Pisarski explains that the art work will be limited to the cancer center for the time being as a kind of “test case or trial period” to evaluate the program. He added that the Noyes Museum will own the art work, which will be returned to the museum after 10 years.

Art Studio to greet spring with old-time hoedown

The Barn Studio of Art in Millville is urging everyone to “get out those dancin’ shoes” for its annual fundraiser, “Spring Ahead and Let Your Hay Down” on March 19 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The event will take place at the Wheaton Arts Event Center, 1501 Glassstown Rd., Millville. Featured will be music by the Run of the Mill String Band, with a caller, dancing and country-style fiddling; and dinner catered by Chef Rob Buono of the Greenwood Inn at Eastlyn Golf Course.

A silent auction will also be conducted, offering original art work, including fabric, wood, glass, pottery, and paintings.

Tickets are $60 for adults, $35 for ages 13 to 19 and $10 for those 12 and under (must be accompanied by an adult).

Tickets may be purchased at the Barn Studio of Art, 814 Whitaker Ave., Millville; through the web site, barnstudio.org; or by calling 856-825-2626.