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OSF HealthCare Cancer Institute

What does the groundbreaking for the OSF Cancer Institute mean for you?

It's time for us to really start to think about new partnerships, new ways of doing things. Think about what it is that the population needs to reduce the burden of cancer in their lives. :13

What will a center like this mean for patients?

Some resources can't be everywhere, but patients shouldn't have to be anywhere other than home whenever it's possible. So we have to find ways the doctors are adequately supported. We have to find ways that patients get access to the right kinds of advice and help. And it's really also about being very honest about what the situation is, what the best approaches are what we can do to bring patients into clinical trials and research studies, and then reaching out to all those factors and convincing all those people to join with us in doing this. :42

Proton therapy. This will give us the first downstate center for that. What does that mean for patient care?

Protons have been recognized as the most complex medical device ever, and it is because it has such capabilities and those capabilities are going to be expanding with the capability to do flash proton therapy, which is a whole new way of delivering radiation to reduce side effects dramatically. You start thinking about the possibilities and you see that this does make sense for many reasons: patient care, children access to care, research, the list goes on and on. Ultimately it results in new things coming, new technologies and new businesses, and then that starts to really feed the economic development of our region. :43

Anything else you think is important for people to know? (High cancer rates)

Understand that the primary aim of the center and the program is that we don't need this treatment facility. The primary goal is to get to the point where very few people have to have such terrifically harmful cancer therapies as chemotherapy and standard radiation therapy. And so we want to make the treatments less toxic, but we also want to prevent people from getting all those cancers that we're getting. The rate of cancers occurring in the community is exceedingly high, very troubling, and that needs to change. :43