



OSF HEALTHCARE
Cancer Institute

OSF HealthCare Cancer Institute readies for first patient

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(February 13, 2024 | Peoria, Illinois) – OSF HealthCare is spearheading a new day in cancer care, impacting communities across Illinois and beyond.

The official blessing of the OSF HealthCare Cancer Institute, located on the campus of OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, was conducted by the Most Rev. Louis Tylka, Bishop of the Peoria Diocese on Tuesday, February 13.

The OSF Cancer Institute will be a one-stop destination for a patient's cancer journey.

"The greatest difference that will happen in this building in comparison to many other centers, is that we've brought everything together. All of the therapies with the clinicians, together with support services and survivorship, together with the kitchen and nutrition," says Robert Sehring, CEO of OSF HealthCare. "It's the ability to bring all of those pieces together and have people collaborate. Whether it's a tumor board, working through a diagnosis or treatment plan. We're doing all of that to meet the needs of the patients that are going to come here."

One of the new treatments happening inside the OSF Cancer Institute is proton beam therapy. This will be the only center outside of Chicago and St. Louis offering proton therapy in the region. Dr. James McGee, founding director of the OSF HealthCare Cancer Institute, says this treatment is less invasive than current treatments being offered.

"It's where a packet of energy with positively charged proton particles is used to go to one spot of the tumor and treat that spot of the tumor," Dr. McGee says. "We're able to go anywhere in the tumor. Very little dose on the entry side, and no dose on the exit side. Using all of that, we can corral the radiation into the tumor and reduce the dose of radiation to the normal and healthy tissues that we don't want to get incidental radiation, like the lymph nodes and things where the immune response is being mounted to that cancer."

The proton beam therapy is powered by a Varian ProBeam® 360° System cyclotron. Dr. McGee says the ability to rotate the System 360° allows the technology to target cancer from any angle.

"We know the biological effect of protons is often felt to be at least 10% higher than with X-ray therapy. That gets factored into treatment planning. We also know the ability to give these treatments in a way that doesn't affect the immune system, allows the actual radiation treatment to be more effective," Dr. McGee says. "We're seeing more and more evidence that there is better tumor control in certain situations. People are not failing that would've failed at those doses with X-ray therapy. Also, we're not generating secondary cancers from the radiation."

Other key features for patients include:

- **Brachytherapy:** Also known as implant radiation, is a treatment that is delivered from inside the tumor and can deliver more intense doses of radiation at the tumor site. Brachytherapy is most commonly used to treat cancers of the female pelvis, prostate, breast, eye and skin. Currently, patients are transported all over the hospital in order to receive these procedures. When the HDR Brachytherapy suite in the OSF

Cancer Institute opens, everything will happen here. This state-of-the-art surgical suite is outfitted with a GE C-T on rails, specially designed for this space. This will make for a much better patient experience.

- **Teaching Kitchen:** The CEFCU Teaching Kitchen will offer a healthy lifestyle educational environment by focusing on prevention and wellness efforts to lower the risk for cancer and cancer recurrence. Patients and families affected by cancer will benefit from classes where they learn how to prepare foods that address specialized needs while going through cancer treatment. Prevention of other diseases and chronic health conditions will also be addressed, with advanced IT technology offering remote access to facilitate live-streamed classes.
- **Healing Garden:** Located on the east side of the campus, this area has a number of features including statues of the Welcoming Virgin Mary, St. Peregrine, the patron saint of cancer, and St. Francis of Assisi. There is a water feature along the path, and the space will host the Gilmore Foundation Teaching Garden. The fresh food grown here will be used in the teaching kitchen, which is right next to the healing garden.
- **Cancer Support Services:** The main focus is assisting patients and their families from diagnosis through survivorship, as well as prevention and for those at a higher risk of developing cancer. These services include nurse navigation, dietitians, financial navigation, counseling, cancer specific clinics and survivorship.

The first patients are expected to be seen by the end of the month. It is estimated the OSF Cancer Institute will treat upwards of 3,700 cancer patients annually with an estimated economic impact on the Peoria-area of \$1-billion over the next decade.

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