



OSF HEALTHCARE
Cancer Institute

OSF HealthCare Cancer Institute chosen to be 1 of 10 sites in America offering early diagnosis of pancreatic cancer

Available for immediate release:

Contact: Matt Sheehan | Media Relations Coordinator | matthew.a.sheehan@osfhealthcare.org

(February 20, 2024 | Peoria, Illinois) – The OSF HealthCare Cancer Institute, located in Peoria, Illinois, will be one of 10 sites across the United States to offer a liquid biopsy to patients for the early detection of pancreatic cancer.

The innovative blood tests, research, and treatment are made possible by a \$4.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health's National Cancer Institute. The OSF HealthCare Cancer Institute's Breakthrough Treatment Center at OSF HealthCare, a collaboration with Origin, has been chosen as one of 10 hubs of this initiative, in collaboration with the Pancreatic Cancer Detection Consortium.

Patients enrolled have been diagnosed with a type of pancreatic cancer called early-stage pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (PDAC). Chandler Wilfong, MD, general surgeon with OSF HealthCare, says one of the main goals of this study is to create a national database of patients believed to be at high-risk for pancreatic cancer.

"This will mean that we have more ability, not just in Peoria, but across the country to study these patients who are most at risk," Dr. Wilfong says. "We also have part of the study looking at exosomal microRNA. That lets us look for markers in the bloodstream that will, we hope, predict or identify early cases of pancreatic cancer."

The American Society of Clinical Oncology identifies pancreatic cancer as the fourth leading cause of cancer-related deaths among adults in the United States. PDAC is particularly deadly, with less than 6% of patients surviving for five or more years after diagnosis, according to TGen, a leader in applying genomic analysis and bioinformatics to cancer drug development.

While not ready for mainstream use, according to Dr. Wilfong, the goal is to make a blood test like the liquid biopsy commercially available for patients in the future. Dr. Wilfong says Peoria was chosen as one of the hub sites because of the community's diverse patient population.

"We cover a large number of patients who have lived in the city, as well as large rural populations, which was not previously well-represented in this study," Dr. Wilfong adds.

Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the United States, and it's increasing year after year, Dr. Wilfong says. The biggest challenge is identifying patients earlier on, and this research hopes to change that.

###