



Work Continues on OSF HealthCare Comprehensive Cancer Center

For Immediate Release

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(July 15, 2020 | Peoria, Ill.) – In late February, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the United States, the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board approved a Certificate of Need application by OSF HealthCare to build a comprehensive cancer center on the campus of OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria.

Since that time, while resources have been focused on caring for those with COVID-19 or frontline caregivers, fundraising initiatives for the Cancer Center have continued, and are more important than ever. The \$250 million project has a fundraising goal of \$100 million.

“The coronavirus pandemic has strengthened our resolve that the Comprehensive Cancer Center must be built to meet the needs of those who come to us for care,” said Sister Judith Ann Duvall, O.S.F., Chairperson of the Boards, OSF HealthCare and a member of the Comprehensive Cancer Center executive steering committee. “We have always recognized the severe burden and hardship that cancer places on virtually every family we serve. Together, we will create a place where cancer care begins and ends with a focus on treating the whole person – body, mind and spirit. Together, with the community, we will make this happen.”

As a regional destination center with the latest technology, one of the hallmarks of the center will be proton beam therapy, just the second center in Illinois, and one of only 32 in North America treating patients. Having proton beam therapy available will reduce treatment times, decrease complications by sparing healthy tissue, reduce side effects, and allow for less disruption in patients’ and caregivers’ lives.

Illinois ranks seventh in the nation for cancer cases with downstate Illinois projected to see 10,000 new cases per year. It is still unknown how the COVID-19 pandemic could impact that number, with people delaying seeking care during the height of the pandemic out of concern of being infected or because some medical services were unavailable in an effort to stem the spread of the virus.

“Peoria will be home to a national leader in cancer care. This center is only the beginning of what will help transform not only our community, but every community that OSF serves, and beyond. My family and I are honored to be part of what will alter the lives of those who will receive the highest standard of cancer care available anywhere in the country and that we can bring it to Peoria,” said Matt Vonachen, Chair of the OSF Cancer Center campaign steering committee.

In addition to proton beam therapy and brachytherapy, the Comprehensive Cancer Center will feature patient education and support spaces, an infusion center, and a full range of cancer-related services.

Over the course of the coming months, activity will begin on the OSF Saint Francis campus to lay the groundwork for construction.

“Work on the design of the Comprehensive Cancer Center is proceeding on schedule. In late 2020 we will begin work on preparing the site by relocating some patient care services and begin demolition of existing buildings in order to bring the Cancer Center one step closer to reality,” said Bob Anderson, President, OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center.

The timeline for construction will depend on philanthropic fundraising efforts, with a goal of providing the first treatments at the center as early as 2023.