

Location chosen for SIU Cancer Institute

The SIU Cancer Institute has a home. This summer, the School of Medicine and the Illinois Capital Development Board purchased 15 individual parcels of land from five local owners at a price tag of just under \$2 million. The nearly 2.5 acres (107,000 square feet), sits on a partial city block bound by Carpenter, Rutledge and Miller streets in Springfield.

"It is tremendously exciting for us to be able to move forward in the development of this special place for people with cancer," says K. Thomas Robbins, M.D., interim director of the institute. "Our research efforts are gaining strength, and we are moving ahead with several important recruitments. Now with a site, planning this multi-purpose building can proceed."

Officials hope construction can begin in next summer and be completed in 2007. BSA Life Structures of Indianapolis and Hanson Professional Services of Springfield are designing the building.

The Institute is expected to be three stories tall, with approximately 60,000 square feet, and include a clinical trials office to coordinate research involving patients, such as national drug trials, novel therapies, and a tumor "bank" for gathering and storing tissue for various



research studies. The facility will support a translational research laboratory where research scientists and physicians can work together. A center for outreach will also be housed in the building. The building also will consolidate the School's multi-disciplinary clinics for breast, head and neck, lung and prostate cancers. Space for chemotherapy treatments and other patient areas, such as support group meeting rooms and a library are also planned.

The SIU Board of Trustees approved plans for the institute in 2000 and the General Assembly approved \$14.5 million for design, land acquisition and construction in 2002. To boost the building's budget, \$6 million in revenue

bonds will be sold. The bonds would be repaid from institutional sources such as the income from the clinical practice of its physician faculty.

"Another source of funds are philanthropic gifts, and this is a perfect time for individuals in the region to become involved, perhaps making a gift in memory of a family member. Major gifts could allow us to expand the building at this early stage," Dr. Robbins explains.

The SIU Cancer Institute is focusing the medical school's efforts in cancer research, physician and public education, and treatment for patients from across central and southern Illinois. More than 50 SIU physician and basic science faculty are involved.

Cancer research efforts emphasize a team approach

While building details are finalized, Dr. Robbins says research efforts for the institute also are proceeding. Numerous clinical trials are under way for breast, prostate, oral cavity, renal and bladder cancers.

"We've recruited two junior research scientists and now are working to recruit

associate directors for basic science and for translational research as well as an outreach coordinator," Dr. Robbins says.

"Because we are using organ-site working groups here at SIU, potential recruitments from around the country find this opportunity very attractive since not all cancer

institutes prioritize the team approach, involving both physicians and researchers," he adds.

SIU faculty members in both Springfield and Carbondale currently have 21 national grants for cancer research as well as eight smaller institutional start-up grants. The current total is

\$7.4 million. New equipment also is being added to develop the core facility including a laser micro dissector, which allows tissue specimens to be prepared for gene analysis.

For more information, visit www.siumed.edu/cancer/ or call 217-545-6818.

Physicians Wanted

Hospital and clinic representatives from 70 Illinois communities talked one-on-one with medical students and residents at the 24th annual Doctor's Fair at the School of Medicine in Springfield in September. Representatives from 34 organizations attended.

"The fair is an easy and convenient way to get a quick overview of what the market wants in terms of specialties needed," said John Record, assistant dean for rural and alumni affairs and the fair organizer.

"The need for physicians in rural and underserved Illinois has grown over the past couple of years as rising medical malpractice premiums have forced many physicians to move out of state, retire early or restrict their services," he added.



The Doctors Fair began in 1979 by the School as part of its mandate to help Illinois meet its need for physicians.

Improving nursing home care

Residents of Lewis Memorial Christian Village in Springfield are now enjoying a better quality of life with implementation of the Eden Alternative, an innovative model of nursing home care. The improvements were made possible by a two-year grant received by the School of Medicine from the Retirement Research Foundation of Chicago in February 2002.

"While the basic physical needs of most residents in nursing homes are met, their spiritual and emotional needs often suffer greatly. The project has focused on improving nursing home residents' quality of life at Lewis Memorial," said Richard Rosher, M.D., associate professor of medicine and chief of SIU's geriatric division, who has overseen the project.

The Eden Alternative model is designed to incorporate changes in the management style and environment of nursing homes to reduce residents' loneliness, helplessness and boredom. The model has been used successfully in numerous nursing homes throughout the country, including a few sites in Illinois.

The total budget of the grant was \$61,189. During the first year of the grant, funds were used for education and training of staff. Sherry Robinson, Ph.D., assistant professor of medicine and clinical nurse specialist, provided more than 80 hours of education and training to more than one hundred Lewis Memorial employees and managed the project's implementation.



SIU Med School Announces Landecker Memorial Award

Jessica Ross has received a monetary award from the Dr. Hildegard C. Landecker Memorial Endowment Fund at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. Ross is the 22nd recipient of the award, which is given annually to a freshman female medical student with high academic standing.

Ross is the daughter of Jay and Betty Ross of Alhambra. She is a graduate of Highland High School (1999) and Blackburn College in Carlinville, where she earned her bachelor's degree in biology (2003).

The Landecker fund was established in 1982 by Manfred Landecker, Ph.D., emeritus professor of political science at SIU Carbondale, in memory of his mother, who was a pediatrician.

For more information about In Brief stories, contact the Office of Public Affairs, SIU School of Medicine, P.O. Box 19621, Springfield, Illinois 62794-9621, 217-545-2155 (office) or 217-545-0580 (fax) or e-mail Nancy S. Zimmers, director of public affairs, at nzimmers@siumed.edu.