

SIU Cancer Institute

UPDATE

Just a year after it was born, the SIU Cancer Institute is growing up fast. Committees for research, clinical care, outreach/education, and development are defining the steps needed for growth, eyeing eventual designation as a National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Developing partnerships with hospitals and health care providers throughout the state, the Institute is being developed to foster research and medical treatments in underserved areas of the southern region.

Here's an update on the progress of the SIU Cancer Institute.

Research

Research is the heart of the Institute, with a focus on understanding the basic structures of cancers, cancer epidemiology in rural areas and experimental therapeutics. In May 2002, the clinical trials office opened and is applying for membership in the American College of Surgeons Oncology Group. Christine Kirkpatrick, R.N., is the research nurse for the Institute. A study of the effects of vitamin E succinate on tumor suppression has progressed to clinical trials.

To complement the Institute's outreach efforts, the Cancer Epidemiology Office will further knowledge of the pattern of cancer in downstate Illinois. In addition, four new basic science cancer research laboratories have been completed at 911 N. Rutledge St., adjacent to current laboratory space and conveniently located near the animal care facilities.

Clinical Care

The dozen faculty physicians at the SIU Cancer Institute are taking a multidisciplinary approach to treatment, providing medical, surgical, psychosocial and a host of related patient-care services. Lung cancer and prostate cancer clinics — modeled after the SIU Breast Center, in which state-of-the-art treatment protocols are provided in

a patient-oriented atmosphere — are ready to begin patient services. The clinics reside in the Baylis Building in Springfield. In addition, a leukemia lymphoma clinic is opening at the Carol JoVecchie Center at St. John's Hospital, where pediatric oncology services also are provided.

One of the newest additions to the Institute's treatment capabilities is photodynamic therapy equipment. A new kind of treatment, photodynamic therapy is useful for multiple types of cancers. The two-part therapy uses a light-sensitive drug, called a photosensitizer, to destroy cancer cells in solid tumors when targeted by laser light. The SIU photodynamic therapy program will first focus on patients with airway and esophageal tumors. In the near future, patients with chest-wall tumors, breast cancer and skin cancers will benefit from photodynamic therapy.

Seeking to get to the core of cancer, the Institute currently is developing a Cancer Genetics Office, which will work with patients who have been diagnosed to test them and to counsel family members about certain types of genetically-linked cancers, particularly breast cancer, colorectal cancer and leukemia.

New faculty include Krishna Rao, M.D., assistant professor of hematology and oncology; James Malone, M.D., assistant professor of head and neck surgery; Jacquelyn Quin, M.D., assistant professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery and Jan Rakinic, M.D., associate professor, Division of Colorectal Surgery. In addition, a national search is under way for a medical director, epidemiologist and a cancer genetics counselor for the Institute.

Outreach

Cancer outreach continues, including continuing medical education conferences, the most recent of which covered advances in pediatric oncology. The Institute also welcomed the American Cancer Society's Wig and Cap Bank to its administrative offices. The Bank provides wigs and related items to patients whose treatment protocols

cause hair loss. Camp COCO, a project of SIU's Department of Pediatrics, continues to be a great success, providing children with cancer an opportunity to experience a week-long summer camp. Employees and medical students also have organized teams for the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life, in which team members walk all night in support and memory of cancer victims.

Finally, the SIU Cancer Institute has joined a group of 15 state and local agencies in a Regional Cancer Consortium, designed to foster cancer outreach throughout central Illinois.

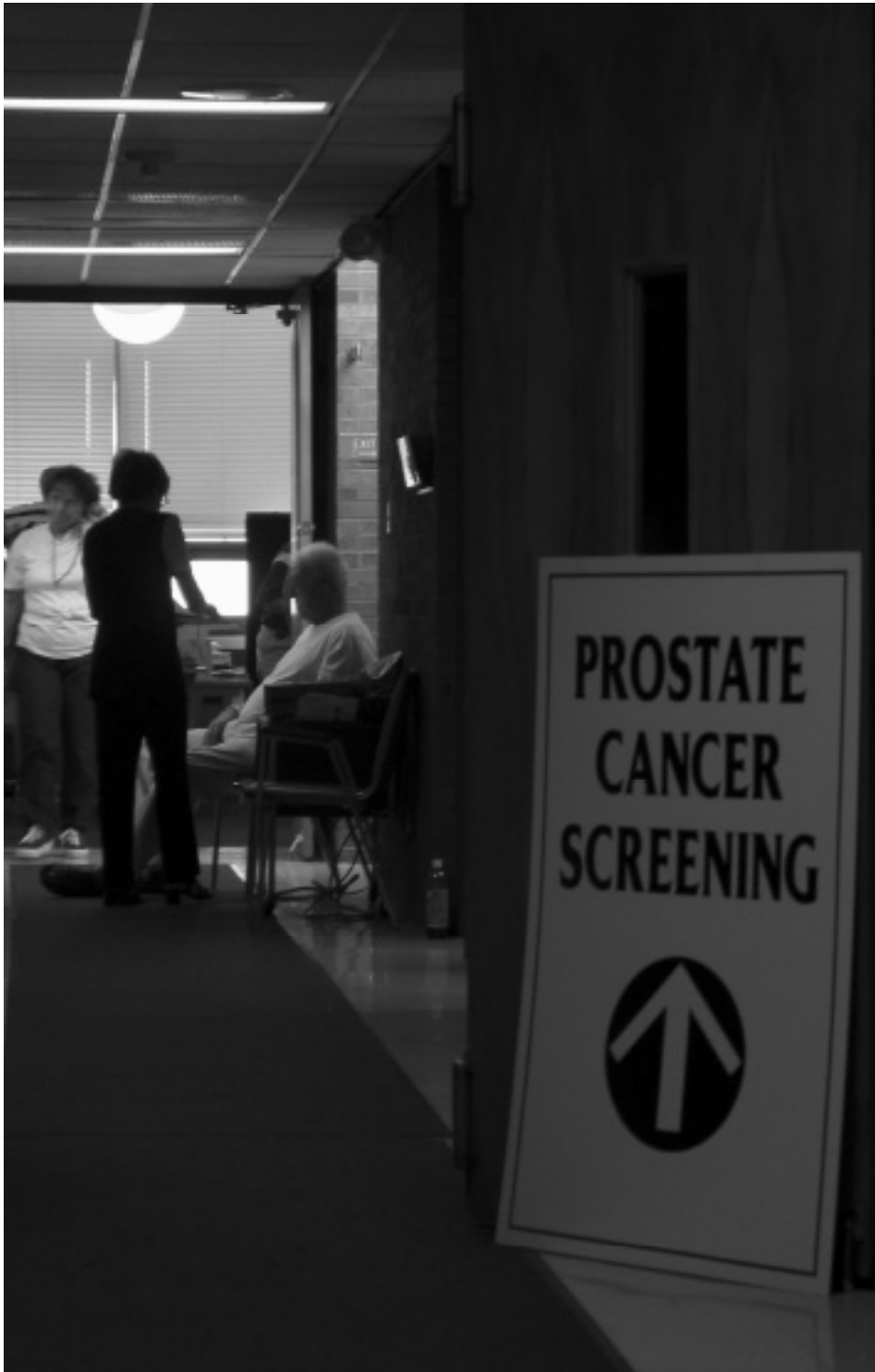
Next Steps

These steps are just the beginning. Funds have been appropriated for a new Cancer Institute building, and design and land acquisition are in the works. Over the next year, the staff of the SIU Cancer Institute will move into the second phase of bringing the Institute to life, activities that include encouraging grant development with the National Cancer Institute and adding national protocols to the clinical trials office. Expanding the regional consortiums, implementing telehealth information improving patient education and expanding clinical services are in the works. Look for more news about the SIU Cancer Institute in future issues of *Aspects* ■



Elizabeth Peralta, M.D., right, works with technician Deborah Engle. Dr. Peralta is a faculty physician at the SIU Cancer Institute, specializing in surgical oncology.

Prostate Cancer Screening Raise



Waiting for their prostate cancer screening, several men sat patiently in chairs, talking with each other and chuckling about when they should take their pants off.

The mood was light, but the issue is no joking matter. An estimated 180,000 men are affected each year by prostate cancer.

September was prostate cancer awareness month, and SIU was part of a city-wide collaborative effort to promote the cause through prostate cancer screenings.

Over the course of three days, numerous Springfield physicians and dozens of nurses and staff helped facilitate the screening, held at the Department of Public Health Clinic and the Sangamon County Department of Public Health, both in Springfield.

It was the introductory effort of the Regional Cancer Consortium, a collaborative effort of the American Cancer Society, Capitol Community Health Center, Illinois Department of Public Health/Office of Health Promotion, Memorial Medical Center, Sangamon County Department of Public Health, SIU Cancer Institute, Springfield City Department of Public Health, Springfield Clinic and St. John's Hospital. The group was created to build regional community networks for cancer prevention throughout downstate Illinois.

Although other regions have done such collaborative efforts, the screening in

is Local Awareness



Bob Granzeier has his blood drawn for a Prostate Specific Antigen test, which was offered at the Regional Cancer Consortium's prostate cancer screening in September.

Springfield was the first for the area. "We're all really excited to be working together," says Diana Weyhanmeyer, R.N., St. John's Hospital Cancer Institute. "We can accomplish more by pulling resources together than we could individually."

The clinics were busy with activity, as nurses and staff efficiently ushered the men through the screening. Linda Olsen, R.N., executive director of the SIU Cancer Institute, helped coordinate the activities. Prostate cancer has been the focus of numerous research projects and presentations at SIU School of Medicine.

"Illinois is under the national average for prostate cancer screenings, so the need is clear," Olsen says. "Screenings like this are important because a lot of men don't go see their physician to check for prostate cancer annu-

ally." She adds that men may not have a physician, may be uninsured or may be too embarrassed to seek the two simple tests used to aid in the early detection of prostate cancer. Those tests, a PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood test and a rectal exam, both were done at the screening.

"Prostate cancer impacts not just men but their families too," says Robert Zettler, section administrator of the Men's Health Program at the Illinois Department of Public Health. "Men need to get over the fear of getting tested. If they don't find out now, their lives could be shortened and their quality of life could be diminished. The screening is a good way to draw attention to prostate cancer and men's health issues. It's a way for us to give men the tools to take responsibility for their health." ■

About Prostate Cancer

■ Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in American men (after lung cancer).

■ It most commonly affects African-American males, men over 50 and men with a family history of the disease.

■ Each year, about 32,000 men die from prostate cancer.

■ A diet high in animal fat may increase the risk of prostate cancer. A diet high in fruits and vegetables may decrease the risk.

■ In its early stages, prostate cancer has no symptoms.

■ Symptoms include difficulty urinating, a weak stream, urgency, painful urination, blood in the urine.

■ Treatments include surgery to remove all of the prostate gland, radiation therapy and hormone therapy.

■ There is no known cause of prostate cancer.

■ As with other cancers, early detection is the key to survival.

—Sources: American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute





“It was an Adventure”

— Ted Hamilton, Cancer Survivor

Children often come up with playful nicknames for each other, but in Ted Hamilton’s case, it was his doctor who called him “Rash Boy.”

The name, meant affectionately, was in response to the skin problems Ted developed as side effects to his leukemia treatments.

Gregory Brandt, M.D., director of pediatric hematology/oncology at SIU School of Medicine diagnosed Ted with leukemia in 1998, and although Ted went into remission right away, he still faced an agonizing three years and two months of chemotherapy. “It was an adventure,” Ted says in a video produced by SIU School of Medicine’s Educational Media Group (EMG). EMG has produced numerous other educational videos for the School of Medicine and the community.

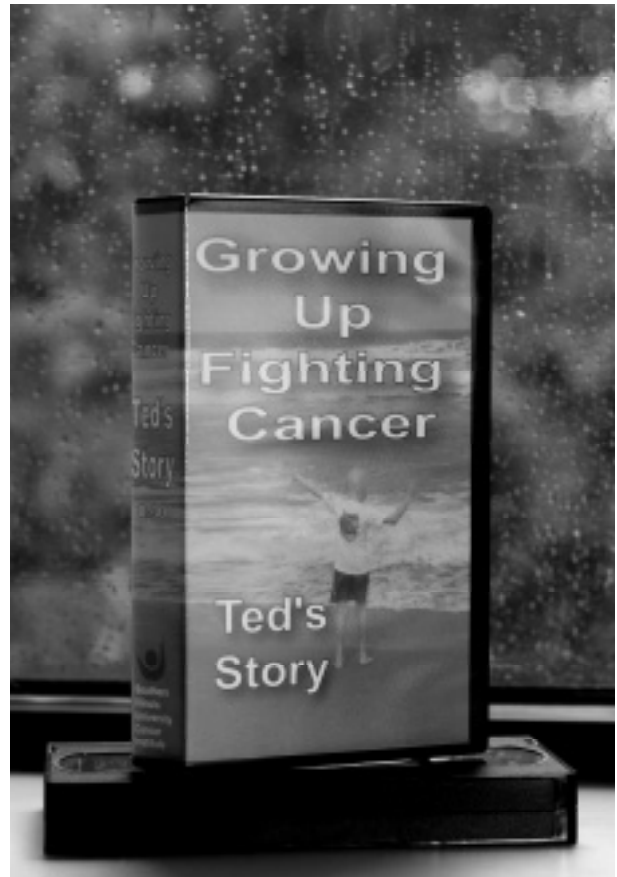
After his adventure with leukemia, Ted decided he wanted to make a video to help other children with cancer. Ted’s mother, Ann Hamilton, director of Continuing Medical Education at the School of Medicine helped coordinate the video with EMG.

The target audience for the video is children diagnosed with cancer. In the video, a healthy, articulate Ted, relaxing on his daybed, talks with Daniel Gosch, a friend he met during his illness. Daniel acts as interviewer, getting the information children want to know. “How did the chemo make you feel?” Daniel asks. “Generally awful,” Ted says,



noting the emotional anguish that accompanied the physical pain. “I was home from school a lot, either with a cold or a fever, back pains and stomach aches.” Ted described other details of illness, including his first stay in the hospital, getting shots and making up school days. He honestly explained the frustrating side effects of chemotherapy, including losing his hair. “The medicine made me hungry, grumpy and made me puffy,” he says. “I couldn’t wear my favorite clothes, because they wouldn’t fit.”

Ted’s message with the video is that cancer won’t stop kids from being kids. “Strangely, I had a lot of fun in those three years,” he says. “I made new friends, kept up with my schoolwork and traveled to Switzerland, Sweden,



France and lots of places in the United States.” He encourages children to participate in hospital support groups and organizations like the Make A Wish Foundation. “They can help you understand that cancer is completely common.”

The eight-minute video, taped in April 2002, was sponsored by the SIU Cancer Institute and has been distributed to schools and clinics, most recently at the Pediatric Cancer Symposium held in September during Pediatric Cancer Awareness month. To obtain a copy of the video, contact the SIU Office of Continuing Medical Education at 217-545-7711. ■

An estimated 77 percent of childhood cancer patients survive.

- The National Cancer Institute