

Partners

The Newsletter for Friends of Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center • 2003, Issue 1

Building for the Future

Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center at The University of Iowa is growing into various new buildings. This physical expansion is proof that our knowledge base is also growing—not only do our established faculty members consistently produce exciting breakthroughs, but we continuously strive to recruit the brightest, most promising physicians and researchers to join our efforts.

This issue of Partners takes a close look at some of our recent and current expansion projects. New buildings and advanced equipment are important, but we're most excited about what they symbolize: our ongoing commitment to eradicating cancer.

Radiation Therapy facility to be among nation's finest

An unseasonably pleasant day warmed the December 13, 2002, groundbreaking ceremony for the new Center of Excellence in Image-Guided Radiation Therapy, a facility that will be a key component in the future of Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center. The ceremony took place under a canopy between the Pomerantz Family Pavilion and Hawkins Drive, where the Center of Excellence will fill the lower level of a planned six-story building scheduled for completion in July 2004.

Occupying approximately 40,000 gross square feet, the \$39.6 million Center of Excellence will house highly advanced technologies that concentrate beams of



An artist's rendering of the Center of Excellence's lobby.

radiation at a single cancerous tumor and have minimal contact with the patient's healthy tissue.

"This facility will be among the finest of its kind in the nation," said John Buatti, M.D., professor and head of the Department of Radiation Oncology, who will lead the

Center along with radiation physicist Sanford Meeks, Ph.D., and free radical biologist Larry Oberley, Ph.D. "We are very enthused about the impact this will have on high-quality care for patients with cancer."

The Center will be the world's first facility capable

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John Buatti, M.D., and Sanford Meeks, Ph.D., pose with their "golden shovels" at the groundbreaking ceremony.

of image- and optic-guided stereotactic radiation delivery for all treatments. Stereotactic radiosurgery and radiotherapy make it possible to deliver one-time or multi-treatment high-dose radiation to targeted areas of a patient's body, in many cases eliminating the need for traditional surgery or conventional radiation therapy.

Patients who undergo single-fraction treatments at the Center may receive treatment in one to three days, versus six to seven weeks for other treatments. "These methods are not only more convenient, they are better tolerated by patients,"

Buatti said.

The new facility will also include:

- *A Cancer Information Services office complete with PCs, videos, and literature for patients and families to learn more about their disease, information on clinical trials, and oncology support services.*
- *Larger treatment rooms to allow for the more advanced technologies and make it easier to incorporate other care providers (i.e. neurosurgeons and anesthesiologists) in treatment.*
- *Patient/family consultation rooms with a comfortable atmosphere where patients and their families can discuss treatment,*



An artist's rendering of a linear accelerator vault.

prognosis, social services needs, and support groups.

- *A waiting area designed like a living room and a pediatric play area full of bright, warm colors.*

The Center will employ a world-class array of multidisciplinary teams that include radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, neurosurgeons, oncologic surgeons, radiation therapists, specialized radiation therapy nurses, and basic science researchers.

To learn how your contributions can help fund this initiative, contact Carol Jefferson, UI Foundation, at 319-335-3305, 800-648-6973, or carol-jefferson@uiowa.edu. ■

New Pediatric BMT Unit a sparkling improvement

An extended stay in a hospital can be difficult for anyone. For a child, the challenge of wanting to lead a normal childhood can be even more trying.

Thanks to a project that has been seven years in the making, pediatric patients receiving blood and marrow transplants at Children's Hospital of Iowa will soon have a new place to call home. The recently completed University of Iowa Dance Marathon Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplant Unit will provide an improved setting for patients and their families.

"It's much more family

and patient friendly," said Frederick Goldman, M.D., director of the Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplantation Program. The unit includes five private rooms large enough for families to sleep in the same room as the patient, a feature many transplant units do not have. "It can be very difficult for a child to be removed from caregivers and loved ones," said Goldman. "We want to preserve those connections with family."

The area also features a special air filtration system, which will allow patients to move around the unit while they are recovering,

giving the unit a more open feeling. "The mood is different," said Goldman, adding that the surroundings are much more colorful. Also available are a playground and a classroom equipped with computers as well as other resources.

Located on the third level of John Colloton Pavilion, the unit is now closer to the current pediatric hematology unit. "We've felt like two separate units," said Assistant Nurse Manager Linda Johnson, R.N. "It will be nice to bring everyone together."

The pediatric program transplants about 15 patients each year with

Working together now while building for the future

My schedule varies significantly from day to day. Some days I spend in the John and Mary Pappajohn Clinical Cancer Center, caring for patients with cancer. Just walking through the reception room or chemotherapy suite serves to remind me that our ability to apply state-of-the-art care in a compassionate manner is what counts. Many of our patients don't have time to wait for exciting new research developments to be translated into new treatments. For these patients and their loved ones, it's urgent that we immediately apply everything we know in the fight against cancer.

I spend other days at the Roland and Ruby Holden Cancer Research Laboratories. In the lab, we know some of the most exciting discoveries may not benefit patients with cancer immediately. We work to move these discoveries forward as quickly as possible and don't abandon an exciting idea just because it can't be applied immediately to patient care. In fact, the approaches to prevention, early detection, and treatment of cancer we use today each took many years to develop. We must keep moving forward, and keep building on our current knowledge, even if the payoff for patients takes many years.

Other days I spend in my administrative office on the telephone, doing paperwork, or in meetings dealing with various administrative aspects of Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center related to patient care, research, and education. Being away from the clinic and the research lab is difficult for me. I have to remind myself that working with paper, instead of patients or test tubes, also addresses our goals of serving patients to the best of our ability.

Fortunately, the Cancer Center's clinical staff is among the strongest supporters of our research activities, and our researchers are among the strongest supporters of our clinical activities. Supporters in the community are also crucial and contribute in multiple ways to both our clinical and research programs through financial support, advocacy, and investment of enthusiasm and time. This teamwork and appreciation for the work of others is at the heart of our ability to serve our patients now while also building so we can serve them better in the future.



George Weiner, M.D.

Director, Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center



an average stay of one and one-half months. Since the original unit opened in 1986, more than 360 pediatric bone marrow or stem cell transplants have been performed.

For patients and their families, the new facility

is just a reflection of the quality of care they are already receiving. "It's been excellent," said Doug DeVries of Anamosa, whose 17-year-old son, Curt, has been a patient in the current unit for more than three months.

"Everyone has been very

dedicated. There was never a time when we doubted their abilities."

And that's Goldman's hope, too. "We want to attract patients from all around the country—not because of the unit, but because of our program." ■

Research Laboratories consolidate Cancer Center's expertise

Researchers have moved in and cancer research is moving forward in the Roland and Ruby Holden Cancer Research Laboratories, which are part of the UI's Medical Education and Biomedical

Research Facility.

A \$25 million gift from four generations of the Holden family of Williamsburg, Iowa, helped make the new Laboratories possible. This gift has also allowed for development

of an endowment to assist in other aspects of the fight against cancer, including support for research being done by established cancer researchers, new cancer investigators, studies that translate laboratory

discoveries into new treatments for cancer, and the UI Palliative Care Service, a team of health care professionals that assist terminally ill patients and their families. ■

A goldmine of information

Carefully packed away in a small room in Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center are large stacks of lifesaving literature. Though the room is sometimes missed in its location off the clinic waiting room, the information it contains is accessible to anyone.

The words, pictures, and graphs within these materials serve as the lifeblood for the Cancer Information Service, a unique program whose staff celebrated 15 years of service on October 30.

"It's important that anyone with a cancer diagnosis get accurate and up-to-date information," said Joan Felkner, a program associate who has worked

since she discovered the Service, she has served as a bridge between the information it provides and many of her friends and family, including her mother, who has survived five cancers, her father, and her 27-year-old daughter.

"(The Cancer Information Service) gets you informed so you can ask questions and not just sit back and let other people take care of the treatment," said Royar. "You can take charge."

Among the thousands of resources the Service provides is information in Spanish and coping materials for children who have lost a loved one to cancer. New materials



Kerry Ostlund, UI Foundation, and Carolyn Beelner and Joan Felkner, Cancer Information Service, share a laugh during the 15th anniversary event.

"(The Cancer Information Service) gets you informed so you can ask questions and not just sit back and let other people take care of the treatment. You can take charge."

— Gayle Royar, Iowa City resident

with the Service for 15 years. "That's what we're here for."

For Iowa City resident Gayle Royar, using the Service has become a family event. In the three years

arrive almost daily. And if Felkner and her staff don't have information someone is looking for?

"We'll research the condition. Write the

information, and actually publish it."

But the stacks of print literature are only part of the Service, which also provides a toll-free phone number, 800-237-1225, a Website, www.uihealthcare.com/cis (which had nearly 30,000 hits last year), and an electronic newsletter in the works to inform health care professionals of new resources.

"One of our strategic goals this year was to update staff and other users of

the service and keep them informed of our resources," said Felkner. "With the e-mail updates, we'll be able to do that quickly and effectively."

In its 15-year existence the Service has provided information to more than 82,000 people in every U.S. state and 35 countries. But for Royar, the information is just across town.

"I can't say enough about the Service as a whole," Royar said. "It's hard to always be positive in their position, but they are." ■

Research Center takes on bladder cancer

Another exciting expansion project is the National Bladder Cancer Research Center, led by Michael O'Donnell, M.D. The Center will be located on the third floor of the new J. Hayden Fry Center for Prostate Cancer Research, which consolidates UI Health Care's prostate cancer research under a single roof within the Roland and Ruby Holden Cancer Research Laboratories.

According to the Bladder Health Council of the American Foundation for Urologic Disease, approximately 12,000 deaths are attributed to bladder cancer each year. The disease, caused by an abnormal growth of cells in the lining and/or wall of the bladder, is the



Michael O'Donnell, M.D., with bladder cancer patient Brian Harris. After treatment with interferon-alpha and BCG, Harris is cancer free.

fourth most common cancer among men and the ninth most common among women in the United States. Each year, more than 55,000 new cases of bladder cancer are detected.

Researchers at the National Bladder Cancer Research Center believe the cure for bladder cancer will come with a thorough understanding of how the disease affects the

human body, along with the development of a complete map of the body's immune defense against disease invasion. Intense focus on the cellular changes that occur with the introduction of various forms of therapy is crucial to understanding the disease process and, ultimately, conquering it. ■

Multidisciplinary tumor boards strive to improve patient care

The circle of medical care has grown at Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center. As part of the Cancer Center's patient-based care plan, a system has been created that includes all levels of support—from social to spiritual to medical, including research science.

"Our goal is to bring all of these things together,"

involves the collaboration of a variety of medical specialties. The Cancer Center has organized these specialists into teams focusing on each of the major cancers.

These teams meet regularly at tumor boards or patient management conferences to discuss their evaluations and treatment strategies for each individual patient. By

patients benefiting from this multidisciplinary approach, but by intentionally incorporating research into the strategic approach to patient care, doctors, nurses, and patients will also be able to benefit in the future. "We want not only to provide the very best care to each patient, but we strive to learn something through the research that our patients participate in to provide continuing state-of-the-art care in the future," Gingrich said.

Most of all, this support has had a positive impact on patients, and for Gingrich, that matters most. "To have the high regard and esteem from the patients we care for," he said, "that's probably the most coveted thing we're after." ■

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— Roger Gingrich, M.D., Ph.D

said Roger Gingrich, M.D., Ph.D., associate director for clinical affairs for Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center. Each treatment

combining the expertise of several different disciplines, patients receive the best possible treatment options.

Not only are current

Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center

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Partners is a publication developed by the Joint Office for Planning, Marketing and Communications to keep friends of Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center up-to-date on the latest developments in cancer research and treatment at The University of Iowa. If you have any questions, please call the Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center administration office at 319-353-8620.

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Printed by: UI Printing

Grace builds a better future

Christopher Grace knows brain cancer all too well. Little more than two years ago, Grace, of Fairfield, Iowa, lost his younger brother, Alexander, to the disease. A mere six months later, his mother, Ann, was diagnosed. Both were treated at Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center. Ann is still fighting the disease.

“The hardest part in dealing with medical conditions in one’s own family, in my experience, is seeing them suffer,” said Grace, a college sophomore at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, where he majors in Vedic Science.

Grace owes part of his college experience to Tim Gullikson, a world class tennis player and legendary coach of many professional players,

including Pete Sampras. Gullikson succumbed to brain cancer in May 1996, but before his death, he and his brother Tom founded the Tim and Tom Gullikson Foundation, a non-profit support group for brain cancer patients and their families.

Every year the Gullikson Foundation awards scholarships to college students whose families are affected by brain tumors. In 2002, Grace, one of 34 national recipients, received \$1,000—a solid foundation from which to build a brighter future.

“I thought that there were probably many individuals with situations worse than my own,” said Grace. “But I thought it was worth applying for, and in the end it paid off.” ■

Help Us Make the Future Brighter

Government support and patient fees do not fully fund Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center’s missions. We must rely on private contributions to help purchase life-saving equipment, fund pioneering scientific research, support medical education programs, and much more. Your support can give hope to those touched by cancer.

To learn how your contribution can make a difference to patient care, education, and research, contact Carol Jefferson, UI Foundation, at 319-335-3305, 800-648-6973, or carol-jefferson@uiowa.edu.