

Building Hope



Proud to be Building Hope ST. ANTHONY Regional Cancer Centre

# A FIRST LOOK AT NEW AND ENHANCED CANCER TREATMENT SERVICES

WHEN YOU DESIGN and plan for a new, state-ofthe-art cancer center, you aren't just designing for today. It's important to look at the future of cancer treatment and how to best serve the patients to ensure a viable treatment center for years to come.

The planned St. Anthony Regional Cancer Center will do just that.

"We will have one of the nicest facilities in the state of Iowa," said Randal Hess M.D., St. Anthony radiation oncologist. "We will be able to provide a level of delivery of treatment that would rival an academic center."

Contributing to the upgraded services are several new pieces of equipment and enhanced therapies that will allow patients to be treated here instead of being referred out to other facilities.

**STEREOTACTIC RADIOTHERAPY** is a new service that will be available when the cancer center opens, made possible by a Truebeam linear accelerator. Stereotactic radiotherapy allows very large doses of radiation to be given in shorter intervals with pinpoint accuracy as the massive machine rotates around the patient. The benefits to the patient are twofold. It decreases the number of times they receive treatment and it dramatically limits the amount of damage to healthy tissue surrounding the tumor, reducing side effects.

"A standard course of radiation therapy would be daily treatment for 35 to 42 days," Dr. Hess said. "Now I will be able to administer the same dose in one to five days. Plus, the patient doesn't have to travel long distances from home."

To receive radiation treatment, a patient must lie on a table and hold very still each time. Not only is finding and maintaining the same position difficult, the patient will naturally have respiratory movement as they breathe. The new **SIX AXIS GANTRY COUCH** allows staff to make it much easier to reposition patients for optimal accuracy and implement "respiratory gating" which manages the beam of radiation to incorporate breathing movements.

"With the aid of external cameras and markers, I can track when they breathe and I can program the machine

to turn on and deliver the radiation only when they hit a certain point in their respiratory cycle," Dr. Hess said. "The patient doesn't have to worry about holding their breath because I can tell the machine to turn on and turn off as they breathe, allowing the beam to hit only the tumor."

To a cancer patient, this enhances their comfort during the procedure, decreases stress and results in significantly increased accuracy.

A CT scanner allows doctors to see cross-sectional images or "slices" of bones, blood vessels and soft tissue inside the body. The upgraded **SOMATOM CONFIDENCE UNIT** will produce a 20-slice image, a significant upgrade from the current machine. An added benefit is a much larger opening into the machine.

"If someone has to have their arms up or out during a scan, it's difficult to get accurate images," Dr. Hess said. "With the larger opening, we can accommodate those patients and include positioning aids like tables and backrests that didn't fit through the machine before."

Along with technological improvements, St. Anthony will also be re-starting the **BRACHYTHERAPY PROGRAM.** Brachytherapy allows doctors to place a radioactive source on or in a patient using catheters. Under computer guidance, the catheter is spooled out, placed on the affected area for an amount of time specified by the doctor and then pulled back into the vault. It is most commonly used to treat gynecologic and skin cancers and is an area of specialty for Dr. Hess.

"It's one of the things I am trained to do and one of the reasons the hospital hired me three years ago," Dr. Hess said. "I am very excited to put this area of expertise to work for patients at St. Anthony."

Dr. Hess and others have been closely involved with the cancer center project from the beginning, making recommendations that will position the center for the future.

A tangible example is the decision to install **TWO LINEAR ACCELERATOR VAULTS.** The vault encases the nearly 10-ton linear accelerator and has walls that are three to five feet thick, constructed of a special kind of lead concrete. While only one vault can be used at a time, replacing a machine can shut down the entire cancer program for six to nine months while a new machine is installed.

"The current machine has been a very good piece of equipment for St. Anthony, but we knew it would reach the end of its useful life span in a few years," Dr. Hess said. "We were also very pressed for space to bring in a new machine."

These were two of the reasons the decision was made to build a new cancer center.

"Now that we will have a spare vault, in the future we can replace the machine easily without interrupting patient care," Dr. Hess explained.

When choosing what equipment to bring to the cancer center, Dr. Hess called upon his professional network of those who had been using the equipment to make sure they were satisfied.

"We looked at what other centers are using and made sure the equipment they have is actually working on a daily basis," Dr. Hess said. "There has been a lot of research into the practicality of what pieces of equipment should comprise a top-of-the-line center and we incorporated that into our plans."

Being an active participant in the process, Dr. Hess has seen first-hand that St. Anthony doesn't cut corners. Building a comprehensive cancer center to serve the area requires a significant investment. He also discovered how careful they have been with spending.

"I've been really impressed with the stewardship of this hospital toward monies that have been voluntarily given from the community," Dr. Hess said. "Their forethought is equally inspiring. This is not just a five-year or a 15-year plan. This is a 30-year investment they're making in this region."

At his previous practice, Dr. Hess served a rural hospital smaller than St. Anthony. The hospital administration strongly supported cancer services there to the extent that nearby academic centers were referring their patients to the smaller hospital for treatment.

"That's the same type of quality cancer care I'm expecting for the future of St. Anthony," Dr. Hess said. "I can hardly wait!"



Cancer Center Atrium - Architect Rendering



RANDAL HESS





FOR VIDEOS & OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANCER CENTER, VISIT US ONLINE AT:

#### BUILDINGHOPEIOWA.ORG

FOR MORE PHOTO RENDERINGS OF THE CANCER CENTER PLEASE SEE PAGE 11 OF THIS REPORT





LIZZY TOMKA



## TOMKA FAMILY MAKES \$5,000 GRAIN DONATION TO ST. ANTHONY REGIONAL CANCER CENTER IN LOVING MEMORY OF DAUGHTER

**ED AND JONI TOMKA** have spent their lives in Carroll, Iowa, where Ed works as a self-employed farmer, raising crops and cattle, and Joni, now semi-retired, served in management at American Home Shield. Together, they raised their two daughters, Maria and Elizabeth "Liz or Lizzy", on a farm outside of Carroll.

But when Lizzy was 14, discovery of a painless lump proved to be a watershed moment in their lives.

"Liz was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in the summer of 1998, just before she was to begin her freshman year," Joni said. "She noticed a sudden, large swelling on her neck one evening at a slumber party."

Unsure if it was a bug bite or an allergic reaction, Ed and Joni took her to the emergency room at St. Anthony, where X-rays of her chest displayed abnormalities. The physician on call referred Liz to a lymphoma specialist at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

"When Liz was diagnosed, we were scared, but optimistic. We were told Hodgkin's had a 95 percent recovery for five years. Liz thought, in her mind, that she would beat it – and we encouraged that," Ed said. "What we later learned was that meant once diagnosed, the patient is expected to live five years. We were devastated when it became apparent Liz was in the five percent and would not survive another five years."

In the specialist's opinion, Liz's disease had been slow growing for a long period of time. The disease grows methodically from one area to the next, and the sudden mass occurred when the cancer moved into the lymph nodes in Liz's neck. Sadly, it had already established itself in her torso.

Ed and Joni became road warriors in the fight against cancer – driving Liz to and from Omaha for chemotherapy and radiation treatments, and eventually a stem cell transplant, for over a year. All of the treatments were in Omaha, including many emergency trips for blood transfusions when Liz's counts dropped.

"Liz spent the rest of her life in and out of the hospital or emergency room for treatment," Joni said. "The nursing staff trained me how to do basic things to clean Liz's port and draw blood samples to reduce some of her time in a medical facility. We tried to keep life as normal as possible, but it wasn't easy."

Throughout her battle with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Liz fought courageously – and without special treatment. When a private tutor was available, Liz insisted on going through the double doors at Carroll High School even after losing her hair due to chemo and radiation treatments. She chose not to wear a hat to school, because she refused to be given a different set of rules from the other students. She enjoyed working at the local ice cream shop. And above all, she cherished time spent with family and friends.

"Traveling and being away from family and friends when you're battling cancer is challenging. Liz sometimes felt isolated with treatments in Omaha," Ed said. "There is added stress on the patient, a caregiver has to be available to take them to appointments and there were times we were separated from our other daughter when we had to travel. This is one of the reasons we decided to donate to the St. Anthony Cancer Center. Cancer is a cruel and malicious disease. If our contribution can make cancer care available closer to even one more family's home, we think it is worth it."



Left to right: Son-in-law Benjamin Lueken, Granddaughter Reegan Lueken, Daughter Maria Lueken, Ed Tomka, Joni Tomka and Granddaughter Rylee Lueken

"During the stem cell transplant, the Leid Center [at the University of Nebraska] had craft activities and social and religious support programs integrated into the treatment programs. These programs were valuable in treating the spirit, while the center treated the body – and we are pleased to hear St. Anthony will offer these services as well," said Joni. Following a courageous battle against cancer, Liz passed away in March of 2000, a couple months before her 16th birthday.

"Liz had an outgoing personality, a perpetual smile and an enthusiasm for life," Joni said. "Her courage and determination will always be remembered, which is why we chose to honor her memory by giving back."

This past July, Ed and Joni made a \$5,000 donation to the new St. Anthony Cancer Center by donating 675 bushels of soybeans. As a former Certified Public Accountant, Joni navigated the donation, sharing that donating grain directly to a charitable organization, instead of selling the grain and donating the cash, may result in a triple tax savings of federal, state and self-employment taxes.

"With a cash donation, we would have needed to donate much more than \$5,000 for St. Anthony to actually receive \$5,000," said Joni.

Ed transported the soybeans to Landus Cooperative in Ralston last fall, and paid for storage and incidentals, for both his own grain and the 675 bushels he planned to donate to St. Anthony. From there, he transferred ownership to St. Anthony, and the same day, St. Anthony sold the grain, generating \$5,000 for the new cancer center without ever physically handling the grain.

"While they should consult their own personal tax accountant first, we feel it's important to let other farmers know how easy the donation process can be – and how important having a local cancer center will be," Ed said. "We ultimately hope there is a cure for cancer, and we are encouraged by the technology that continues to evolve, taking a targeted, less invasive approach to fighting cancer."

"Until that time, we hope cancer treatment continues to advance, caring for both the spirit and the body of patient, as well as the family of the patient," Joni said. "While the brick and mortar building is important, it takes an entire community of doctors, nurses, caregivers, counselors, and donors to fight this disease. We feel the St Anthony Cancer Center has that potential."

Ed and Joni encourage others to donate to the St. AnthonyCancerCenter. Communitymembersmay do so online at *www.buildinghopeiowa.org*.

## DONATIONS AS INDIVIDUAL AS YOU ARE

**IN MY ROLE AT ST. ANTHONY,** I have the pleasure of meeting with and talking to people across our service area. I have met people I would never have had the chance to meet and hear their personal stories of joy and sorrow, courage and resilience, hope and love.

Everyone I've talked to has been touched in some way by cancer. Whether it's a family member, friend, co-worker, neighbor or themselves, they each have their own unique experience with a disease that affects us all. They understand the need for the services the cancer center will provide.

And just as individual as their experience is how people have chosen to donate to the project. As always, we strongly recommend talking to your accountant or legal advisor when you are considering a gift of any kind, but I wanted to make you aware of some ways people have chosen to support the cancer center that fit their unique circumstances. People like Ed and Joni Tomka.

As you read in their story, they were able to donate through a **GIFT OF COMMODITIES**. This process is easy to coordinate through a local co-op or grain handling facility and could result in a significant tax savings for the donor.

If you are at or near the age of required minimum distribution (RMD) from an IRA, you can make a direct **GIFT FROM THE IRA** to a charitable organization. If you are 70 ½ or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 to charity, tax-free, each year. The money counts as your RMD but isn't included in your adjusted gross income.

Long-term appreciated assets like **STOCKS**, **BONDS**, **FARMLAND OR OTHER PROPERTY** can also be directed to charity. The benefit is you don't have to pay capital gains tax on the appreciated value, and you can take an income tax deduction on the full fair-market value. If you find yourself with a **LIFE INSURANCE POLICY** you no longer need, you can donate it to a charity by talking to the administrator of the policy and changing the beneficiary designation to that charity.

An **ESTATE GIFT OR A GIFT THROUGH YOUR WILL** is a good way to benefit the cancer center through a personal legacy that will touch people's lives for years to come.

Two of the most common donations are the **ONE-TIME GIFT AND MULTI-YEAR PLEDGES.** By spreading the amount of your gift over several years, you have the value of time to be able to fulfill your commitment to the project.

The most important thing to know is that every gift is important and valued, no matter the amount. As we get closer to meeting our goal, what will help push us over the finish line are the individual donations from the generous and genuine people it's been my honor to meet during this journey.

A journey that has solidified my faith in what makes this region so special. It has been and always will be the people.

#### SINCERELY,

Trise Bobots

Trish Roberts, CFRE St. Anthony Development Director Ph: (712) 794-5223 Email: troberts@stanthonyhospital.org www.buildinghopeiowa.org

## THE NURSE NAVIGATOR - AN ADVOCATE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

**THROUGHOUT A PATIENT'S CANCER JOURNEY,** the amount and complexity of information can often be overwhelming. Understanding this is an emotional and stressful time in their lives, St. Anthony has created a position specifically designed to help patients navigate their way through the process.

The position, appropriately called a Nurse Navigator, is held by Katie Nelson, RN, BSN, Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN).

"I see my main role as making sure that patients have the easiest time through the most difficult course of their life," Nelson said. "Every day, my sole purpose will be to connect with patients and ask them what they need and how I can help them get that accomplished."

Having one main point of contact means patients can direct all their questions to one person rather than guess who to call about different aspects of their treatment. If a patient isn't feeling well, they may not know if they should call their primary doctor, their surgeon, or their medical or radiation oncologist.

Additionally, a nurse navigator can assist with scheduling appointments, communicating with healthcare providers, insurance questions, understanding side effects, transportation, connecting patients with support services or breaking down any barriers that may be causing them difficulty as they are receiving cancer care.

Or as Nelson explains, whatever she can do to help a patient get through what they're going through that day.

"Sometimes it might be just someone to talk to or a friend who knows what the patient is going through," she said. "And if I don't know the answer, I will put them in touch with someone who will."

Nelson, originally from Glidden, has been a radiation oncology nurse at St. Anthony for more than four years. She became interested in cancer as a teenager when her grandmother passed away from the disease.

"I knew when I entered nursing school that I wanted oncology to be my focus," Nelson said. "I hate cancer but it's so complex and different that learning all I can about it really intrigued me."

As she looks to complete her master's degree in fall 2020, the nurse navigator position seemed a natural next step for her.

"The more I listened to what the new position entailed, it really spoke to me," Nelson said.

She is excited to combine her medical knowledge with, what she says, is her favorite part of nursing.

"Advocating for my patients so they can have the best treatment and experience is what I love," she said. "Some people may not need me, but they know I'm an option down the line if they need somebody to help."



KATIE NELSON RN, BSN, OCN



CHERI THEULEN RN, BSN, OCN



# A LITTLE BIT EASIER

**FROM THE MOMENT PATIENTS ARRIVE** at the newly designed St. Anthony Regional Cancer Center, they will notice the care and consideration that went into the planning. From the covered entrance to the spacious 21,000 square floor plan, the goal of the design in this free standing building is to make the treatment process as pleasant as possible.

"When a person has a cancer diagnosis, you want to do everything you can to help them feel comfortable and offer them a welcoming environment," said Clinical Supervisor of Infusion and Same Day Surgery, Cheri Theulen, RN, BSN, OCN. "We will continue to provide the exceptional care that we are known for in a less stressful setting, hopefully making it easier for our patients."

Two of the most noticeable improvements will be more privacy for patients, and an abundance of natural light with a panoramic view of the city and adjacent valley. There will be windows all the way across that let in light and provide a great view.

"Natural light is a healing force. It can help decrease stress and positively effect moods," Theulen said.

The space in the infusion area will also be expanded to allow for more room around an increased number of recliners, as well as two private and three semi-private treatment rooms.

"Allowing patients the option of a private room or a more communal setting can fit each patient's preference and needs," Theulen said. "Those needs may change as their treatment plan progresses and we can accommodate that. There is also more room for loved ones to provide support and not feel like they're imposing."

These and other improvements didn't just happen. Theulen and Charge Nurse Stefani Yetmar were in on the design process from the beginning, collaborating on what was necessary and needed from the front-line perspective.

"We've been involved from day one and our input was really valued," Theulen said "We put a lot of thought into this project with the goal of making the patient experience the best it could be."

They also considered the nurse workflow and how they could best serve their patients and families. "Knowing that our patients are our top priority, we needed to do it right," she said.

Additional enhancements include an on-site pharmacy and blood draw room, additional laptop stations for nurses to monitor patients, a larger nourishment center, a conference room for patient education and support groups, and a flex office to accommodate the dietitians, chaplains, social workers, mental health providers and other support personnel. These improvements will mean a more streamlined process for everyone involved.

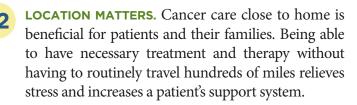
For Theulen, the new cancer center is a dream come true.

"We really want this for our patients," she said. "Cancer is a difficult and challenging disease. If we can make the cancer journey just a little bit easier and make our patients feel a little bit better, that's what we need to do."

## TOP 6 REASONS TO DONATE TO ST. ANTHONY REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

#1

**YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY CANCER.** In St. Anthony's service area, over 9,500 people are living with cancer, either in treatment or remission. And 1,100 more will be newly diagnosed this year.



**#3 THE CANCER TEAM BECOMES YOUR TEAM.** The dedicated staff of doctors, nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, chaplains, educators, and social service providers have a passion for their patients and become an extension of your family.

**EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS.** Your donation doesn't need to have a lot of zeros to make an impact. Every dollar will be put to good use, directly impacting access to quality cancer care in a comfortable setting that is close to home.

- **#5** INVESTING IN GROWTH STRENGTHENS THE REGION. The St. Anthony Cancer Center will provide a necessary resource for west central Iowans and be a point of connection for the region. It will offer another reason for residents and businesses to consider locating to our area.
- **BE A PART OF SOMETHING GREAT**. You can feel good about contributing to something meaningful that will continue to have impact long into the future. In a time when many rural healthcare options are shrinking, the expansion of the St. Anthony Cancer Center shows its commitment to the area and the people who live here.



#### SIKKEMA FAMILY

Diane Sikkema underwent four years of cancer treatments traveling between Carroll, Des Moines, Omaha, and Rochester, MN. She would have loved to have been able to complete all treatments in Carroll, and this cancer center was something she would have loved to have locally. Her family wanted to bless others fighting cancer and chose to mark her memorials to go to the St. Anthony Cancer Center.

*Pictured in the photo are Cruze and Kyla Owen, two of Diane's grandchildren.* 



**DR. BILL & JOAN BLOHM** 

With the full backing of their family, Dr. Bill and Joan Blohm were among the first people to show their support of the St. Anthony Regional Cancer Center with a generous donation. "When we first saw the Cancer Center story, we knew it was something we could and would support," said Bill Blohm. "Both Joan and I have dealt with cancer personally and have made St. Anthony our choice for all of our various medical issues. Being able to use IRA funds to pay for our pledge has been a great option for us."

# WHAT IS A TUMOR BOARD?

#### WHEN IT COMES TO ANALYZING and

evaluating cancer cases, treatment and outcomes, many minds are better than one.

That is why the Oncology Tumor Board at St. Anthony is so important. The monthly meeting provides a forum for doctors involved in radiation, medical oncology, pathology and infusion to focus on three or four patient cases and discuss current and emerging treatment options.

But it is not just physicians that participate in the Tumor Board.

Other members of the cancer care team, including primary care physicians, radiologists, physical and occupational therapists, spiritual care providers, social workers, dietitians, and nurse navigator are also crucial to the discussion.

"The whole purpose of the Tumor Board is to take a multidisciplinary approach to cancer management," said St. Anthony Radiation Oncologist, Randal Hess, M.D.

The team benefits from each other's input and perspective while the patient ultimately benefits by having multiple medical professionals review and assess their diagnosis and treatment plan.

"Recently, an elderly patient was going through a difficult head and neck treatment," Dr. Hess said. "It was a dietician's suggestion to insert a feeding tube prior to treatment to make sure the patient was able to maintain strength to make it through the entire course."

During the meeting, participants focus on cases that present a challenge in patient care or cases that are uncommon. They discuss how to approach the case from their different perspectives which can significantly impact the best course of action.

"We are assessing points of their care that all of us should be considering," Dr. Hess said. "This is a way for all of us to meet in the same room and discuss patients both in retrospect and prospectively, with all of us having input at the same time."

Another example was a patient who was ready to give up treatment entirely because they didn't have funds available.

"At that point, the social worker becomes more important than the physician," Dr. Hess said. "That's why it is so important to have everyone in the room at once." The collaborative sessions are currently open to medical personnel who have privileges at St. Anthony. In the coming months, however, it will be open to physicians and support staff from surrounding counties who have referred their patients to St. Anthony. Physicians can earn CME credit for attending the sessions, but Dr. Hess knows the real benefit of the Tumor Board is the shared insight.

"Being exposed to cases beyond those you manage personally and gaining the perspective of the team treating those cases is extremely beneficial," Dr. Hess said. "We want to provide that opportunity for as many medical professionals as possible because it will result in a better path forward for our patients."



ANN SLECHTA

Mother, Wife, Entrepreneur, Cancer Survivor

"As a two time cancer survivor, I believe the St. Anthony Cancer Center will show our community that a cancer diagnosis isn't the end of the world. My diagnosis was an opportunity to thrive and live the life I was meant to live. I have already made changes in my personal life and am excited for the future. Every day I wake up with a thankful heart."

# CANCER CARE PHYSICIANS AT ST. ANTHONY



**MARK WESTBERG, M.D.** Medical Oncology & Hematology Served St. Anthony: Since 1986

ROBERT BEHRENS, M.D. Medical Oncology & Hematology Served St. Anthony: Since 2003





RANDAL HESS, M.D.

Radiation Oncology Served St. Anthony: Since 2016



Cancer Center Infusion Area - Architect Rendering



### LEAH GRETEMAN

Daughter, Sister, College Student, Cancer Survivor

"Cancer is the last thing that anyone expects. When I started treatment at St. Anthony, I was quickly put at ease by the warm and generous nurses and staff in the infusion room. I owe a lot to them and to the Lord for helping me through my experience."



# **COMMUNITY SUPPORT** MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

#### COMMUNITY IS SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART of our

lives. Whether it's our community of friends and family, the community in which we live, the west central Iowa community, or beyond, we all rely on these networks for love and support.

At St. Anthony, we have been blessed and humbled by how our communities have supported our efforts to build a regional cancer center. Every day we are awed by the trust you have placed in our mission to provide the best possible cancer care for our area.

For our friends and neighbors battling cancer, having their communities and support systems nearby is critically important. Hours spent traveling to distant cities for care is time spent away from loved ones. Our new regional cancer center will not only change lives and build hope for those battling cancer, but it will also give our patients more quality time at home.

Providing this care is a privilege we do not take lightly. By bringing together the various medical disciplines needed to effectively diagnose and treat cancer, this new facility will provide the people, equipment and healing environment our patients and families deserve.

Through the amazing generosity of individuals and businesses in our communities, we have made great progress toward our goal of raising \$7 million. The building is under construction and plans are in place to install state-of-the-art treatment options.

This is the right time for our communities to be courageous and united as we fight alongside those we care about the most. Please join us in supporting the new regional cancer center by using the enclosed envelope or scheduling an appointment to discuss a donation that makes sense for you.

By helping us reach our goal, you will become part of a legacy that will demonstrate to the next generation the amazing things that can be accomplished when communities come together for the greater good.

Sincerely,

Ed Smith President and CEO

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Nick Badding Board Chairperson

www.stanthonyhospital.org



ED SMITH President & CEO

NICK BADDING

Board Chairperson