

St. Joseph Hospital Selected for NCI Community Cancer Center Program Pilot

Orange, Calif., June 14, 2007 -- St. Joseph Hospital was named as one of 14 sites in the country today by The National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health, to participate in a three-year pilot for the NCI Community Cancer Centers Program (NCCCP). St. Joseph Hospital was the only hospital on the West Coast named for the NCCCP pilot.

“St. Joseph Hospital’s participation in the NCCCP pilot is far reaching in establishing the St. Joseph Hospital Cancer Center as a world-class cancer facility,” says St. Joseph Hospital President and Chief Executive Officer Larry K. Ainsworth. “St. Joseph Hospital’s experience and clinical expertise in cancer research, addressing health disparities, information technology and biospecimen collection and management, will help the NCI formulate best practices for cancer care both now and in the future.”

The NCCCP pilot is designed to encourage the collaboration of private-practice medical, surgical, and radiation oncologists -- with close links to NCI research and to the network of 63 NCI-designated Cancer Centers principally based at large research universities. Evidence from a wide range of studies suggests that cancer patients diagnosed and treated in such a setting of multi-specialty care and clinical research may live longer and have a better quality of life.

The pilot program will research new and enhanced ways to assist, educate and better treat the needs of underserved populations—including elderly, rural, inner-city and

low-income patients—as well as racial and ethnic groups with unusually high cancer rates.

“It is becoming clear that one of the greatest determinants of cancer mortality in the years ahead will be access to care,” said NCI Director John E. Niederhuber, M.D.

“This program will succeed if it can bring the benefits of our latest science to people in the communities where they live.”

The pilot will begin at eight free-standing community hospitals and six additional locations that are part of national health care systems. St. Joseph Hospital was selected as one of the eight free-standing community hospital participants. The sites will be funded for a collective total of \$5 million per year.

An NCI panel of experts and an independent group of outside experts will set milestones, monitor progress, and evaluate success of the three-year pilot and then issue recommendations for a full-fledged program.

NCCCCP pilot sites will study how community hospitals nationwide could most effectively develop and implement a national database of voluntarily provided electronic medical records accessible to cancer researchers. The sites will also study methods of expanding and standardizing the collection of blood and tissue specimens voluntarily obtained from patients for cancer research.

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