



AMH Welcomes Outpatient Cancer and Infusion Center

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Oncology Services First to Move into New Medical Office Building on Dec. 12

ALTON, IL -- Expanding cancer treatment, accommodating more patients at one time and bringing care closer to home are all improvements Alton Memorial Hospital is offering in the new medical office building on the AMH campus.

The AMH Outpatient Cancer and Infusion Center will open in Suite 132 of the new building on Monday, Dec. 12. The phone number will be 618-463-7323. Hematology Oncology Consultants, comprised of Dr. Thomas Ryan and Dr. Mark Woodson, is relocating its practice from the Saint Clare's Hospital professional building.

Chemotherapy and all infusion treatments will now take place in the new space, according to Stacey Ballard, manager of Oncology Services at AMH. Ballard says the new building -- combined with the adjacent Cancer Care Center, where radiation therapy has occurred since 2005 -- provides local residents and their caregivers a one-stop destination for treatment.

“For starters, we have a separate registration area in the new building that's just for our oncology patients, so they don't have to go over to the general registration department in the main hospital and then come back,” Ballard says. “From an infection control standpoint and from a convenience perspective, that's great.”

Additionally, the Outpatient Cancer and Infusion Center has its own labs so testing can be done onsite.

Chemotherapy treatment at AMH had previously been done in a suite of five chairs at a time. Ballard says the new suite's added capacity enables treatment for up to 20 patients at a time in private rooms -- with room to grow.

"Since chemotherapy can take several hours per treatment, this enables us to schedule many more patients, be more accommodating with their time preferences and make them as comfortable as we can," Ballard says. "We will even have iPads that patients can use for music or movies to help pass the time during their treatment."

Chemotherapy services in the location are on the ground floor, close to the adjacent new parking area, as opposed to the former location on the second floor of the AMH Hatch Wing.

Meanwhile, the Cancer Care Center has finalized an agreement with Washington University that will provide services to AMH beginning this year. Ballard says the center is in the process of hiring a radiation oncologist who will be a member of the teaching faculty at WU.

"This agreement opens the door to other physicians and other consultations," Ballard says. "With this partnership, Washington University will support and provide physicians to back up our radiation oncologist."

"A lot of times, oncology patients have a caregiver who has to do the driving and needs to take time off of work. If the patient was undergoing radiation treatment, that meant five days a week for maybe 15 minutes per visit. If the hospital was in St. Louis, that could be nearly an hour's drive each way. And for a patient who is already weak, it could be a huge strain and a huge commitment for the caregivers as well. Now patients have the option of being driven five to 10 minutes from their home and back. With everything these patients are going through, we want to make them as comfortable as we can."

In addition to the Medical Oncology services, Alton Orthopedic Clinic is moving into Suite 130 of the new \$6 million, 33,000-square-foot Medical Office Building in late

December. Other offices scheduled to move into second-floor offices in 2012 include Family Physicians of Alton, Endocrine and Diabetes Care of Alton and OB/GYN Associates of Alton.

An open house for the new building is being planned for Thursday, Feb. 9.