



Cancer Care at Alton Memorial Has Raised the Bar

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Dr. Joel Simmons Announced as Radiation Oncology Medical Director

ALTON, IL – Getting the best cancer treatment at home combined with all the advantages of top-quality clinical trials is the best of both worlds, says Dr. Joel Simmons, the new medical director of radiation oncology at Alton Memorial Hospital's Cancer Care Center.

Dr. Simmons, who began seeing patients April 23, was drawn to Alton Memorial due to the commitment from the administration to develop a state-of-the-art Cancer Care Center and provide the highest quality of care possible for residents living in the Riverbend area and surrounding communities.

Dr. Joel Simmons saw his first patients April 23 at Alton Memorial Hospital's Cancer Care Center.

He is excited to be a part of the newly formed relationship with Washington University, which will significantly increase the access of Alton's patients to state-of-the-art cancer treatments and national clinical trials. Dr. Simmons will also have privileges at the Siteman Cancer Center in St. Louis.

“The advantage of the relationship with Siteman is twofold,” Dr. Simmons says. “Our patients will have access to a long list of clinical trials. That assures us of a standard of

care and also creates an opportunity for cutting-edge treatment. We'll see many of the same treatments available at most of the top cancer hospitals in the country.

"The second thing is our patients will have the opportunity to undergo certain special procedures at Siteman and then come back to Alton for their follow-up. We're very excited about this."

"Our agreement with Washington University School of Medicine will allow Dr. Simmons to collaborate and receive support from physicians and research scientists consistently ranked among the best in the country," said Stacey Ballard, manager of oncology services at Alton Memorial. "We are here to assure patients that cancer can be cured in many cases and that we will do all within our power to make that happen."

A native of Ohio, Dr. Simmons completed medical school at the Northeast Ohio Medical University in 2002. He completed an Internal Medicine internship at Mount Carmel West in Columbus in 2003 and a residency in Radiation Oncology at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in 2007.

Dr. Simmons, now with BJC Medical Group of Illinois, became board certified by the American Board of Radiology with a certificate in Radiation Oncology in 2008. He is an active member of the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) and Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG).

Dr. Simmons has been a private practice radiation oncologist in central and northeast Ohio for the entirety of his career. He has served communities in Dayton, Akron and most recently Chillicothe, and has worked in both hospital-based and free-standing cancer centers. He treats all varieties of cancer (lung, prostate, breast, head and neck etc.) and describes his skill set as general practice with significant experience in Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy.

"I was always more attracted to the physical sciences of medicine, so radiation oncology was something I took to very quickly when I was exposed to it my last year of medical school," Dr. Simmons said.

Dr. Simmons joins Alton Memorial just four months after medical oncologists Dr. Tom Ryan and Dr. Mark Woodson relocated their offices to the AMH campus.

"We are very excited to have Dr. Simmons join us and add his expertise to our cancer care team," says Dave Braasch, AMH president. "We've invested significantly in cancer care specialists, services and facilities to ensure patients are not alone in their fight."