



Saint Anthony's Brings New Cancer Specialists to Area

November 14 2012 1:42 PM

(Alton, IL) – Saint Anthony's Health System has announced plans to bring two new cancer specialists to the community – the first medical oncologists to set up a new cancer practice in Alton in over 23 years.

Kevin Palka, M.D., Board Certified Medical Oncologist and Hematologist, will start seeing patients Wednesday, January 2 in the newly renovated infusion center in the Saint Clare's Professional Building, Suite 303. As a cancer specialist, Dr. Palka has most recently treated patients at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, where he also served as Assistant Professor of Medicine. A Duke University undergraduate and Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Palka attended medical school at the University of Texas in Dallas. He completed advanced Fellowship training in Hematology/Oncology at Vanderbilt University in 2009 and is board certified in Oncology and Hematology, as well as in Internal Medicine.

"We want to provide residents with access to the finest cancer specialists in the Alton area so they can receive their care on this side of the river," says E.J. Kuiper, President & CEO of Saint Anthony's Health System.

"With extensive knowledge, experience and skill in advanced cancer treatment, Dr. Palka brings a personalized and holistic approach that is essential in caring for individuals with cancer."

Joining Dr. Palka in the summer is Dr. Manpreet Sandhu, Medical Oncologist and Hematologist. She is currently receiving advanced Fellowship training in Hematology and Medical Oncology through the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in New Jersey, where she also completed her internship and residency. Board certified in internal medicine, Dr. Sandhu provides treatment for all cancers and specializes in breast cancer.

“Dr. Palka and Dr. Sandhu will be located in a beautifully remodeled area that features a warm, compassionate and stress reducing environment,” Kuiper says. A family/visitor lounge with a soothing décor – including a fireplace and flat screen television -- helps to create a peaceful atmosphere for patients and families.

A public open house of the new cancer infusion center in the Saint Clare’s Professional Building is scheduled on Thursday, December 13, from 4 to 6 p.m. Dr. Sandhu will be on hand to meet members of the community at the event.

Both Dr. Palka and Dr. Sandhu are members of Saint Anthony’s Physician Group. In the last four years, 13 physicians and mid-level providers have joined Saint Anthony’s Physician Group, making SAPG the largest multispecialty group in Alton with 26 primary care physicians, specialists and physician extenders.

In addition to working with Saint Anthony’s Physician Group, Dr. Palka and Dr. Sandhu will work closely with area primary care physicians, as well as with Dr. James Piephoff, Radiation Oncologist, and the team at Saint Anthony’s Cancer Center of Excellence. Saint Anthony’s Cancer Center of Excellence is one of a select group of 106 currently accredited cancer programs across the United States and one of six in Illinois to receive the Outstanding Achievement Award from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer that recognizes top cancer programs that strive for excellence in providing quality cancer care.

“The national recognition by the College of Surgeons is such a positive reflection of the outstanding care provided through our cancer program and is a great honor for our cancer team,” says Kuiper. “Now more than ever - with the addition of medical oncology - area residents can be assured they are being cared for by very dedicated and highly skilled health care professionals through our cancer program.”

Saint Anthony’s is the only Illinois Outstanding Achievement Award recipient south of Chicago.

Using advanced medical technology, the physicians and clinicians on Saint Anthony’s medical oncology team evaluate, diagnose and treat patients with a wide range of cancers and blood disorders, including solid-tumor cancers such as melanoma, colon, breast and prostate cancer, as well as malignancies of the blood such as leukemia and lymphoma.

For more information about Dr. Palka and Dr. Sandhu, please call 618-474-4855.