

St. Elizabeth Hospital, Mary Bird Perkins partner for outpatient cancer care center

Staff report

Residents of Ascension Parish and surrounding areas are expected to have more convenient access to outpatient care as a result of the recent partnership announced between St. Elizabeth Hospital in Gonzales and Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center (MBPCC).

Officials said under the arrangement the partnership will build and operate a new 12,000 square foot radiation treatment facility, investing a total of \$6 million - approximately \$4 million in leading-edge cancer treatment technology and \$2 million in additional construction and renovation.

The partners anticipate construction of the facility will begin in fall 2007 near the hospital in Gonzales.
"Together, we are addressing

an important need - local access to high quality cancer care," said Dee Lelaine, president and CEO of St. Elizabeth Hospital. "We are delighted to partner with Mary Bird Perkins to make it possible for St. Elizabeth and the physician community to provide a broader range of critical services for cancer patients in the greater Ascension area." Lelaine said the new treatment facility will feature advanced technology, including a high-energy linear accelerator utilizing image guided radiation therapy (IGRT), intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT), state of the art imaging using positron emission tomography and computed tomography (PET/CT), sophisticated treatment planning stations, as well as physics and dosimetry quality assurance instrumentation and software.

See CANCER, page 5A

CANCER, continued from page 1A

The facility will also be supported by MBPCC's 16-member medical physics team. Medical physics is a discipline vital to the provision of radiation therapy.

Radiation oncologists at the new facility will include members of the Southeast Louisiana Radiation Oncology Group practicing exclusively at Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center locations. These physicians have over 130 years of combined experience and, during the next few months, two additional radiation oncologists will be joining the group for a total of eight member physicians.

Mary Bird Perkins and St. Elizabeth Hospital will also continue jointly enhancing outreach services with a grassroots approach to saving lives through education and early detection. The organizations have a history of partnering to provide free educational and cancer screening initiatives. With the support of local healthcare professionals, it is expected that these efforts will grow, ultimately improving the health of the community-at-large for generations to come.

"It is an honor to have the opportunity to work with St. Elizabeth, community physicians and residents in the greater Ascension area to sup-

port cancer care," said Todd Stevens, president and CEO of MBPCC. "Through comprehensive outreach services and advanced treatment, we look forward to developing together a dynamic partnership dedicated to fighting cancer."

MBPCC also has a long and established relationship with Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, sister hospital to St. Elizabeth. Since 1992, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center and Mary Bird Perkins have been jointly accredited for its comprehensive cancer program by the American College of Surgeons. The Cancer Program of Our Lady of the Lake and Mary Bird Perkins was recently named as one of 14 cancer programs in

the country selected by the National Cancer Institute to participate in its new and innovative National Cancer Institute Community Cancer Centers Program pilot.

Sponsorship by the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System (FMOLHS) has provided the means to expand and upgrade St. Elizabeth Hospital to meet the needs of the growing area it serves. A 95-bed community hospital with 400+ team members and 100 physicians on staff, St. Elizabeth is one of four FMOLHS hospitals, including Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge, St. Francis Medical Center in Monroe and Our Lady of Lourdes in Lafayette.