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Regional Cancer Center Expansion Opens

(Fort Myers, Fla. – June 22, 2018) --- A new, 24,000-square-foot building is now open at the Regional Cancer Center in Fort Myers. Located near the intersection of Interstate 75 and Colonial Boulevard, the Regional Cancer Center is a collaboration of Lee Health, 21st Century Oncology and Florida Cancer Specialists. The construction project began last year to accommodate a growth in services, including expansion of the pharmacy, palliative care services, genetic counseling and survivorship programs.

“The Regional Cancer Center has seen double digit growth every year since it opened in 2008,” says Dennis Bruens, Vice President of Oncology and Palliative Care Services for Lee Health. “Our multidisciplinary team offers a comprehensive approach to care and having these services provided all under the same roof makes a world of difference. In recent years, we’ve added genetics services and greatly enhanced care coordination through nurse navigators, requiring some of our services to move to another building nearby. Centralizing all services in one place again is an invaluable convenience for those in our care. We anticipate growth in many of our services, and we are preparing for the future to best serve our patients.”

Fighting cancer is hard enough without having to undergo the stress and inconvenience of traveling out of the area for treatment. The Regional Cancer Center offers treatment for nearly every aspect of cancer care, in one convenient location. Collectively, Regional Cancer Center is the fourth largest community cancer treatment center in the state of Florida. With more than 15,000 patient visits each year treating a variety of malignancies in both men and women, RCC survival rates meet or exceed the national average for all cancer treatment facilities

The expansion is home to the Regional Cancer Center’s multidisciplinary clinic – a one-stop shop for patients and a model for breast care nationwide. On the day of clinic, patients meet and have one-on-one assessments with the medical oncologist, surgeon and radiation oncologist. These meetings help the patient retain and absorb the information about their diagnosis, understand their options, and feel more empowered and included in the decision-making process.”

Following the patients’ meetings with the physicians, the medical team meets to discuss the case in a round-table tumor board. In addition to the medical oncologist, surgeon and radiation oncologist, the tumor board includes:

- Gynecologic oncologist
- Cardio-oncology physician
- Radiologist
- Pathologist
- Breast cancer nurse navigator
- Genetic counselor
- Clinical oncology pharmacist
- Oncology dietitian
- Cancer rehabilitation navigator
- Plastic surgeon, if necessary

A dedicated team of cancer navigators made up of oncology-certified nurses work with patients, families and physicians to help the cancer patient “navigate” the health care system. Cancer navigation services currently are available for brain, breast, colorectal, lung, ovarian/uterine and head & neck cancers. No referral is needed for this service, which is provided free of charge.

New physician offices are housed in the new building, as well. Bianca de Souza, M.D., hematologist/oncologist, who joined Lee Health’s oncology program last fall, now has offices in the new space at Regional Cancer Center. Surgical oncologist Mark Bloomston, M.D. will also move into offices in the new space.

In addition to comprehensive, evidence-based care that is convenient, accessible and personalized, the RCC offers a healing garden, meditation room, deli and Cookie's Place, a special boutique dedicated to men and women diagnosed with cancer, undergoing treatment or caring for a loved one. The shop boasts a huge variety, from high quality wigs and post-surgical and mastectomy forms and garments to essential oils, jewelry, soaps and other specialty items.

Skanska Construction was contracted as manager at risk and HDR for architectural design services.

For more information about the Regional Cancer Center and services available, please visit: www.swflcancercenter.org/.

About Lee Health

Since the opening of the first hospital in 1916, Lee Health has been a health care leader in Southwest Florida, constantly evolving to meet the needs of the community. A non-profit, integrated health care services organization, Lee Health is committed to the well-being of every individual served, focused on healthy living and maintaining good health. Staffed by caring people, inspiring health, services are conveniently located throughout the community in four acute care hospitals, two specialty hospitals, outpatient centers, walk-in medical centers, primary care and specialty physician practices and other services across the continuum of care. Formerly known as Lee Memorial Health System, the organization began its second century of service with a new name in 2016. Learn more at www.LeeHealth.org.

Cutlines:

IMG 1773

Expansive windows provide abundant natural lighting in the reception and rehabilitation areas of the expanded Regional Cancer Center.

IMG 1790

Lee Health President & CEO Dr. Larry Antonucci (center) cuts the ribbon to officially open a 24,000-square-foot expansion at the Regional Cancer.

(front row, l to r) Lee Health Board of Directors Nancy McGovern and Dr. Sanford Cohen, Lee Health Vice President of Oncology and Palliative Services Dennis Bruens, Dr. Antonucci, Dr. Arie Dosoretz, 21st Century Oncology; Dr. Lilliana Bustamante, Florida Cancer Specialists; Dr. James Orr, Medical Director, Regional Cancer Center, and Therese Everly, Lee Health Board of Directors.