

A FAVORABLE ALLIANCE

New partnership brings latest treatments, research to cancer patients

BY JOHN BERGGREN

New treatments for several types of cancer are showing promising results for eradicating the disease. A new partnership with the University of Kansas Cancer Center as a member of the Midwest Cancer Alliance is giving patients at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center access to some of the latest clinical trials and research for cancer care.

The Midwest Cancer Alliance (MCA) was founded in January 2008 as an effort by the University of Kansas Cancer Center to improve access to cancer care in the region and with the goal of one day earning a National Cancer Institute designation as a Comprehensive Cancer Center. A network of hospitals and research programs across Kansas and western Missouri makes up the MCA to provide a collaborative environment to enhance cancer care in the region and allow KU to roll out its latest clinical trials and research efforts to community-based clinics.

“The overall goal of this alliance is to make the best in treatment and the best in research available to patients in this region,” said KU Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little at a press conference for the announcement in October.

MORE THAN CLINICAL TRIALS

Patients at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center will have access not only to the latest clinical trials originated by KU, but also to consultation services with KU oncologists and staff members through a video conference system at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center. The MCA also allows the opportunity for staff at Tammy Walker to collaborate with their peers on many of the latest trends to enhance cancer prevention, detection and treatment.

“The alliance is like a two-way street,” says oncologist Bill Cathcart-Rake, M.D. “Our patients will get access to new drugs and have the opportunity to participate in clinical trials

more quickly, and we’ll give back information we collect to further KU’s research. It’s really another step we’ve taken to validate our commitment to providing leading-edge cancer care here in north central Kansas.”

PATIENTS DESERVE THE BEST

Larry Henoch, Salina, who was diagnosed with colon cancer three and a half years ago, remembers vividly the day he first walked into the Tammy Walker Cancer Center.

“My wife was with me and we walked in the doors scared to death,” Henoch says. “The staff made us feel welcomed, helped put us at ease and told me I wasn’t going to die.

“I went through radiation, chemo, surgery and some more radiation to be sure and today I’m cancer-free. It’s a blessing to have a facility like this just two miles from my house, and the Midwest Cancer Alliance is just going to make the Tammy Walker Cancer Center even better.”



Medical oncologist Bill Cathcart-Rake, M.D., showed KU officials the medical oncology and outreach services utilized by patients.



Radiation oncologist Claudia Perez-Tamayo, M.D., led KU officials, including Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little (right), on a tour of the radiation oncology department at Tammy Walker Cancer Center, after it joined the Midwest Cancer Alliance in October.

