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Abington-Jefferson Health breaks ground on new cancer care center

By **Linda Finarelli**

Digital First Media

Abington - Jefferson Health held a ceremonial groundbreaking May 23 on a \$75 million, outpatient Asplundh Cancer Pavilion planned for the Abington Health Center campus in Upper Moreland.

About 150 hospital dignitaries and fundraisers involved in a Reimagine Cancer Center Campaign gathered for the celebratory event at the 30.36-acre site at 3941 Commerce Avenue, where the new 86,000 square-foot, two-story pavilion will feature comprehensive, leading-edge technology across the full spectrum of cancer care.

Statistics show more than 90,000 residents in Abington Hospital's service area have been diagnosed with cancer and will require continued care and screening, according to the Abington Health website.

Services at the new center will include radiation therapy and chemotherapy with a dedicated oncology pharmacy, the hospital said in announcing the event. It will also offer the latest features designed to reduce stress and enhance healing, including large walls of windows for outdoor views and natural light, gardens and walking paths, a café serving healthy foods, resource areas for families and patients, and a community space for support groups and healing therapies.

Terming it a "milestone event,"

Abington - Jefferson Health President Meg McGoldrick said planning for the facility began three years ago after "challenging ourselves to reimagine cancer care." The outpatient center will provide "seamless care and the most advanced treatment modalities," and "will set a new standard in cancer care," she said.

Noting more than 65 percent of the fundraising goal has been met, McGoldrick thanked the Asplundh family — donors of the lead gift of \$5 million in memory of their parents, the late Carl and the late Emilie Asplundh — "for their extraordinary generosity and leadership," the Reimagine fundraising committee chaired by Bruce A. Goodman, and political officials who "have helped us get to this point."

The Reimagine campaign has a goal of raising \$35 million, of which \$23 million has been raised to date, Jill Kyle, vice president of institutional advancement for Abington - Jefferson Health said prior to the event. In addition to the donation from the Asplundh family, a \$3 million state grant has been secured, she said.

"We plan to exceed the \$35 million goal," Goodman told the crowd, adding the facility "will be the new home and a testament to a team of professionals."



Taking part in the groundbreaking of the Asplundh Cancer Pavilion are from left:

Mark Shahin, MD
Acting Director, Rosenfeld Cancer Center

Meg McGoldrick
President, Abington-Jefferson Health

Laurence M. Merlis
Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, Jefferson Health

Stephen K. Klasko, MD, MBA
President and CEO, Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health

Ed Asplundh
Honorary Co-Chair
Reimagine Cancer Campaign

Chris Asplundh

Emily Jane Lemole

Carl Asplundh Jr.

Bruce Goodman
Chair, Reimagine Campaign

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“We’ve built a great team, we have a great team, we need a new stadium,” said Dr. Mark S. Shahin, director of the Hanjani Institute for Gynecologic Oncology and interim director of the Rosenfeld Cancer Center, thanking those who work at Jefferson’s Sidney Kimmel and Abington’s Rosenfeld cancer centers.

The new facility will be “convenient and accessible,” and “probably second to none,” he said.

“Leadership played a significant role in this project,” said Edward Asplundh, honorary co-chair of the Reimagine campaign. The decision to build “a command center for the continuing

war against mankind’s most difficult disease” means that “many will be cured here;” others will have treatment to extend their lives. The new pavillion “will be a building of hope, compassion and health.”

“It could not be more exciting what we’re doing,” said Dr. Stephen Klasko, president and CEO, Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health.

“When we started this whole project,” he said, referring to the merger a year ago of the two health systems, the two entities discussed “how health care, how education and how discovery is done to create a different level of value than ever before.”

“The goal is to provide the best care and caring,” Klasko said. “We are moving cancer education and delivery forward.”

Set to open in 2018, the groundbreaking “brings us one step closer to realizing the future of cancer care,” the hospital said. Abington’s new partnership with Jefferson promotes collaboration and ultimately, integration with the National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson, one of only 68 NCI-designated cancer centers in the United States.