Press Release

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UPR’S COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER TO INAUGURATE ITS FIRST CLINICAL SERVICE OFFERING

With the upcoming opening of its Radiotherapy Center in November and the construction of its hospital well underway, the Center is closer than ever to its objective of strengthening the hope of cancer patients in the Island.

San Juan, PR October 13, 2015 – The University of Puerto Rico’s Comprehensive Cancer Center (UPRCCC) will inaugurate its new Radiotherapy Center in November, featuring the most modern technology available in Puerto Rico for radio-oncology treatments. This would be the first clinical service offering of the Center, which will expand significantly with the opening of its hospital next year.

“Cancer is the second cause of death among men and women in the Island. For the first time in Puerto Rico we will be able to treat this disease using a multidisciplinary approach. We will have the scientific base in the Research Center and the infrastructure and specialized personnel in the Radiotherapy Center and the new hospital. This new offering, in collaboration with the education, prevention and treatment infrastructure already in place in the Island, will help us give it our all to this battle,” said Uroyoán R. Walker Ramos, interim president of the UPRCCC’s Board of Directors and president of the UPR.

Located next to the UPRCCC’s Research Center, the new Radiotherapy Center comes about as part of a collaborative agreement with the Liga Puertorriqueña Contra el Cáncer. With a $15 million investment, the Center will feature highly specialized equipment and trained and certified radio-oncologists to administer this type of treatment. Doctor Carlos Chévere Mouriño will serve as its medical director.

“The quality of the equipment we already have in place and the personnel we have on board will signify a more strategic, localized and effective treatment for patients. Tumors will be treated aggressively, while protecting healthy tissue and diminishing side effects,” added doctor Chévere.
Hospital construction under way

Last month the last steel beam topped off the structure that will house the Comprehensive Cancer Center Hospital of the UPR. The construction is more than 50% completed and the hospital should be ready to receive patients during the last trimester of 2016.

The 10 floors, some 300 thousand square feet infrastructure will feature 96 beds, 12 of them for intensive care. It’s estimated that during its construction phase the UPR’s CCC Hospital will generate some 1,300 direct jobs and some 500 permanent jobs once it’s operational.

“Our vision is to retain the local medical talent by providing the infrastructure and competitive setting needed to allow them to fully apply their specialized medical skills here in the Island. We’re also going to reach out to local and international professionals, associations and institutions that can help us be in the forefront in terms of cancer-related research, education, prevention and treatment. Together, we will be able to face this battle head on,’ added Walker Ramos.

Currently, the UPRCCC houses a Research Center where a group of scientists from the UPR Medical Science Campus works on research programs focused on prevention, early detection and treatment of different types of cancer. According to Walker Ramos, the Radiotherapy Center and CCC Hospital’s clinical offerings will compliment the work being led at the Research Center in order to offer cancer patients a research-based, multidiscipline prevention and treatment program.

“Once all components are in place, the patient’s treatment plan and his/her progress will be discussed and managed by a specialized team of oncologists, nurses, hematologists, radiologists, surgeons, using a multidisciplinary approach - all in one place, here in Puerto Rico,” added Walker.

The UPRCCC has been working hand in hand with the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, one of the 25 comprehensive cancer centers in the United States designated as such by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), on the hospital’s development plans, training programs and research focused on the Hispanic population.

“Our vision is to achieve the NCI designation during the next decade. This will not only position us among the top medical cancer institutions in the United States, but will also bring us more resources and federal funds for research and treatment,” stressed Walker Ramos.

The UPRCCC was created by law (No. 230 August 26 2004, as amended) as a public corporation affiliated to the UPR and is overseen by a Board of Directors which includes: four ex officio members (the president of the UPR, the dean of the UPR’s Medical Science Campus, the secretary of health and the Dean of the UPR’s School of Medicine; and five private citizens with proven commitment to the fight against cancer, who serve for determined periods of time. In 2009, the Center inaugurated its state of the art facilities at Centro Medico, which house 10 laboratories where a large part of their research activities currently take place.