

## St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin

Connecting communities to comprehensive cancer services

The St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center is an integrated program that encompasses two hospitals, St. Vincent and St. Mary's in Green Bay; Prevea Health, a multispecialty physician group of more than 200 providers; oncology provider groups Green Bay Oncology and Radiation Oncology Specialists; and multiple independent physicians. The Regional Cancer Center's group of 22 oncologists includes the only gynecologic oncologist and the only team of pediatric hematologists and oncologists in Northeastern Wisconsin. For more than five decades, the cancer program has held accreditation from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, and in 2011, the Breast Program received NAPBC accreditation.

For the past 10 years, St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center ([www.onefamilyofcare.com/cancer](http://www.onefamilyofcare.com/cancer)) has been the recipient of the NCI's Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP) grants. As a CCOP, St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center provides access to over 150 active clinical trials for residents of Northeastern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Through the CCOP, patients can

access clinical trials in multiple close-to-home locations, including both the St. Vincent and St. Mary's locations, as well as through the satellite clinics of physician investigators or through organizations affiliated with the St. Vincent Cancer Collaborative.

"We have several cancer centers in smaller communities that are part of our research program," said Sally Luehring, Executive Director, Cancer Services, St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center. "Because of our CCOP they have the ability to offer patients clinical trials to which they otherwise would not have access." St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center's affiliations with eight NCI-sponsored cooperative groups, in addition to the Wisconsin Oncology Network and Mayo Clinic Cancer Research Consortium allow for a wide range of trials.

### Outstanding Accrual Rates

In 2010 the St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center enrolled more than 20 percent of its analytic case volume to clinical trials, as compared with national rates of 3 to 4 percent. Luehring attributes the program's outstanding accrual rate to a strong commitment on the part of physicians, staff, and patients.

"We have doctors that are extremely dedicated to advancing the science of cancer treatment so they are committed to enrolling appropriate patients on clinical trials. The research staff screens the charts aggressively. The chart of every new patient is screened for participation in a clinical trial. I think, too, it's the attitude of our patients. It's a very Mid-Western attitude of wanting to help other people by participating in a trial," she said. "The fact that patients return to our center for cancer care after traveling to a large academic medical center for a second opinion is another testament to the quality of our cancer program."

The St. Vincent Cancer Research Institute has a staff of 10.8 full-time employees including a program director, a regulatory specialist, clinical

### Vital Statistics

- Total licensed hospital beds
  - St. Mary's: 158
  - St. Vincent: 547
- Number of designated inpatient cancer unit beds
  - St. Mary's: 26
  - St. Vincent: 32
- Number of new analytic cancer cases seen in 2010: 1,168

### Selected Support Services

- Patient navigation
- Healing Arts Program
- Support groups, including ACS Reach to Recovery, Road to Recovery, Look Good Feel Better
- Resource Library for patients
- Genetic risk assessment and counseling
- Oncology Exercise and Rehabilitation Program
- Boutique for image-related patient items (wigs, prostheses)
- Survivorship Program
- Palliative Care Program
- Hospice Program



A graceful water feature enhances the healing garden area at St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center—St. Mary's campus.

research associates (7.8 FTEs), and a clinical research assistant.

**Responding to Community Needs**

Comprehensive outpatient cancer centers are located on the campuses of both St. Vincent and St. Mary's Hospitals. Each facility offers multidisciplinary care that encompasses medical oncology and radiation oncology services, as well as a full complement of support services, including patient navigation services, case management, social work services, integrative services, nutritional services, and spiritual care. (See "Selected Support Services" on page 17 for a snapshot of resources available to patients and their families.)

In 2008, in response to increasing demand for services, a project was launched to expand the outpatient cancer center on the St. Mary's campus. Development of a new 117,000-square-foot addition was undertaken with a vision of creating a center of healing and hope with a commitment to environmental stewardship. Within the addition, a new 36,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art cancer center was built using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. Among the energy conserving features are a design that maximizes the use of daylight, Energy Star heating and cooling systems, rainwater collection and irrigation, and a bio-filtration system that purifies storm and runoff water. Throughout the building low-PVC or PVC-free materials were used along with such natural materials as stone, wood, slate, and limestone. During the construction process, 88 percent of materials were recycled. Since 2007 St. Mary's Hospital earned the Practice Greenhealth Environmental Leadership Circle Award for five consecutive years, one of approximately 30 hospitals in North America to receive this distinction.

Atop the new facility is a 22,000-square-foot "living roof" garden—the largest living roof in the state—with walking paths and outdoor seating, providing a unique tranquil space for patients, families, and staff to rest and reflect. On the ground level, 2,400



St. Mary's "living roof" garden.

square feet of tiered healing gardens provide views of greenery from both levels of the two-story cancer center.

Visitors can access the cancer center through a private entrance, entering a spacious lobby with a soothing water-wall feature. In the new facility, both radiation oncology and medical oncology have implemented electronic medical records, which help to streamline communications and the care process. The 18-chair infusion center features private, semi-private, and open bay treatment areas with a view of a healing garden, providing additional capacity to the 20 chairs at St. Vincent. A dedicated oncology pharmacy is located adjacent to the infusion area.

Radiation oncology services are offered at both cancer centers. In the new cancer center on St. Mary's campus, radiation oncology services are provided on a Trilogy linear accelerator. Treatment modalities available include IMRT, IGRT, RapidArc, and SBRT treatment. The cancer center on the St. Vincent campus has a Trilogy and a second Varian linear accelerator. Radiation oncology services include IMRT, IGRT, RapidArc, SBRT, SRS, and a comprehensive brachytherapy program with both HDR and LDR. St. Vincent's Cancer Center has a fully equipped operating room that can be used to provide intraoperative radiation therapy when needed, and is also regularly used for brachytherapy procedures. Da Vinci robotic surgery is also available on the St. Vincent campus.

**Sharing Strengths for Quality Care**

St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center connects with other providers in Northeastern Wisconsin through the St. Vincent Cancer Collaborative. Through the Collaborative, compo-

nents of St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center's program are combined with the strengths of individual community hospitals in the surrounding region. The Collaborative has grown over time evolving from outreach efforts that began in the 1990s when St. Vincent partnered with a regional hospital to provide radiation oncology services to that community. Over the years, through a variety of cooperative arrangements, St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center has linked with regional hospitals to provide additional services. An important factor in the long-term relationships between these institutions has been "a true willingness on the part of our oncologists to travel," noted Luehring. "In fact our medical oncologists started taking services out to patients over 20 years ago with outreach satellite centers. They saw it as making more sense for one doctor to get in his car to travel 60 or 80 miles to see 30 patients than for those 30 patients to have to travel to Green Bay." Today, the St. Vincent Cancer Collaborative links St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center organizations in Marinette, Oconto Falls, Sturgeon Bay, Manitowoc and Sheboygan, Wisc.

The foundation of the Collaborative rests on the long-term relationship between St. Vincent and these regional organizations, said Luehring. "St. Vincent has served as a tertiary center for decades for many of the regional hospitals and has been a regional leader in cancer care," she said. While each cooperative relationship is unique and aims to meet the needs of the specific community, the Collaborative shares a single overarching goal: to allow patients to receive as much cancer care as possible close to home while providing a seamless link to state-of-the-art specialized services should the need arise. 🏠