



STATE OF GEORGIA

*OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR*

**Sonny Perdue**  
**GOVERNOR**

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## **Governor Perdue Announces Georgia's Involvement in National Cancer Institute's Community Cancer Centers Program**

*NCI Launches a Pilot of its Community Cancer Centers Program  
to Bring State-of-the-Art Cancer Care to All*

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue announced today that Georgia is one of only 14 states where community hospitals have been named by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to participate in a three year pilot for the NCI Community Cancer Centers Program (NCCCP).

“We are excited that the National Cancer Institute has chosen Georgia to participate in this innovative program,” said Governor Sonny Perdue. “Increased cooperation, communication, and transparency between private and public health care systems and their patients will help everyone tackle this terrible disease.”

St. Joseph's / Candler's oncology program, the Nancy N. and J.C. Lewis Cancer & Research Pavilion( LCRP), will participate in the pilot phase of a new program that, if fully implemented, will help bring state-of-the-art cancer care to patients in community hospitals across the United States.

The program is designed to encourage the collaboration of private-practice medical, surgical, and radiation oncologists -- with close links to NCI research and to the network of 63 NCI-designated Cancer Centers principally based at large research universities.

Evidence from a wide range of studies suggests that cancer patients diagnosed and treated in such a setting of multi-specialty care and clinical research may live longer and have a better quality of life.

The pilot program will research new and enhanced ways to assist, educate, and better treat the needs of underserved populations—including elderly, rural, inner-city, and low-income patients—as well as racial and ethnic groups with unusually high cancer rates.

The proposal brought forth by St. Joseph's/Candler's LCRP included collaborations with the Georgia Cancer Coalition (GCC), a statewide cancer control initiative, as well as other Georgia community cancer facilities. Facilitated by the Georgia Cancer Coalition, SJ/C was able to develop clinical alliances with two other community cancer centers, allowing it to propose a program that would allow SJ/C to gather data and input from southeast, southwest and northwest Georgia. This information exchange from each region will provide collective experience and resources to demonstrate and provide evidence based approaches to meet the requirements of the NCCCP.

“Being selected to lead this program not only impacts Savannah but the entire state of Georgia,” states Paul P. Hinchey, SJ/C President and CEO. “By working with the Georgia Cancer Coalition as well as other prestigious facilities in Rome and Columbus, our state can make an enormous contribution to the treatment and eventual eradication of cancer. I can't think of a more worthwhile endeavor and the Nancy N. and J.C. Lewis Cancer & Research Pavilion is honored to accept this task through this pilot project.”

SJ/C proposal to the NCI included clinical alliances with The Harbin Clinic in Rome, Georgia, and the John B. Amos Cancer Center in Columbus, Georgia. The Harbin Clinic is the largest, privately-owned, multi-specialty physician clinic in the state. It is also providing leadership in Exchange, serving as the clearinghouse for information on progress at the second demonstration site in Rome. The John B. Amos Cancer Center is a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary cancer center serving a 14-county service area in Southwest Georgia.

SJ/C and the GCC have already demonstrated that working collaboratively can show results. As part of the Georgia Cancer Quality Information Exchange's first demonstration project, SJ/C developed a standardized framework or “toolkit” for providers and validated the use of the specific measurements in a clinical care delivery setting. The “Exchange” is an initiative to develop a method of measuring the quality of cancer care: from cancer prevention, to

early detection, to cancer diagnoses, treatment, follow-up and palliative care. "In step with the National Cancer Institute, the Georgia Cancer Coalition is developing statewide alliances that support the building of clinical trials networks, biospecimen collection, information technology capability, cancer research and methods of effectively serving the uninsured.

The Georgia Cancer Quality Information Exchange has the potential of being the first statewide evidence-based cancer quality measurement program. This new model is a bridge between the academic medical centers and the community hospitals, where approximately 85% of cancer care is delivered," says Bill Todd, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Cancer Coalition.

The national pilot will begin at eight free-standing community hospitals and six additional locations that are part of national health care systems. The sites will be funded for a collective total of \$5 million per year. An NCI panel of experts and an independent group of outside experts will set milestones, monitor progress, and evaluate success of the three-year pilot and then issue recommendations for a full-fledged program.

NCCCCP pilot sites will study how community hospitals nationwide could most effectively develop and implement a national database of voluntarily-provided electronic medical records accessible to cancer researchers. The sites will also study methods of expanding and standardizing the collection of blood and tissue specimens voluntarily obtained from patients for cancer research.

"It is becoming clear that one of the greatest determinants of cancer mortality in the years ahead will be access to care," said NCI Director John E. Niederhuber, M.D. "This program will succeed if it can bring the benefits of our latest science to people in the communities where they live."

The Nancy N. and J.C. Lewis Cancer & Research Pavilion (LCRP), a 56,000 square foot freestanding facility located in Savannah, Georgia, houses the complete continuum for cancer care from prevention and early detection through treatment, survivorship and palliative care. A recent partnership with the Medical College of Georgia enhances the overall program's services through increased research opportunities and medical staff development.

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For more information about the NCI Community Cancer Centers Program, please visit the home page at <http://ncccp.cancer.gov>

For more information about cancer, please visit the NCI Web site at <http://www.cancer.gov>, or call NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).