

## Doctors Hospital opens new cancer center

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Joey Gomez

EDINBURG, July 11 - Physicians and local leaders held a ribbon-cutting for a new Cancer Center at Doctors Hospital at Renaissance, ushering in a 54,000 square foot facility that allows for diagnosis, treatment and support for Rio Grande Valley residents.

Hospital staff said there would be an emphasis on decisions made at the board level being experienced at the bedside.

"We bring a new level of technology to this facility," said Dr. Carlos Cardenas, chairman of the DHR board. "The facility we have built here is on par with anything you would see in Houston."

The facility is part of the \$75 million package, together with the upcoming Women's Hospital and Behavioral Center that will bring 1,500 new jobs to the area.

The Cancer Center, with 30 infusion treatment centers, is slated to treat approximately 680 patients in its first year of operation.

"We have the facility to take care of a lot of patients, and also participate in studies as they come on down," Cardenas said. "This is just a culmination of what our vision has been from the very beginning."

Cardenas said he hopes the facility will attract people who can put together studies for cancer research and educational opportunities for people in the area to train. He said research would be a major factor for continued growth in the area.

And many at the state level are trying to make that happen.

"This year we passed legislation that would permit \$3 billion to be spent over a period of ten years to find a cure for cancer," said Rep. Veronica Gonzales, D-McAllen. "The money would be spent to bring researchers into the state of Texas, for universities to study the research, and ultimately find a cure."

Gonzales spoke about HB 14 and HJR 90 that would appropriate \$3 million every year for the next ten years for cancer research in Texas. The amount coming to the Valley is currently unknown.

"Nine voting members will decide where the money gets spent, and we expect that the majority will go to some of the larger areas like Houston that have a lot of medial research already being done," Gonzales said.

"But there is always the possibility for the Rio Grande Valley, and with a facility like this where we already have an ongoing facility there is a good possibility that we can see some researchers come here or at least see some money come down to the Valley."

Asked if the facility increases the chance of the Valley getting funding, Gonzalez said: "I believe so. Without a facility, there would be no reason to come...with the new specialized oncology facility it increases our chance for funding."

The ribbon-cutting drew hundreds of people, including local dignitaries such as state Reps. Ismael "Kino" Flores, D-Palmview, and Armando "Mando" Martinez, D-Weslaco, Edinburg Mayor Joe Ochoa, and McAllen Mayor Richard Cortez.

Local doctors said they were optimistic about the impact of the new facilities and technologies.

"The most important thing of all is we have brought the best in the Valley in terms of equipment and therapy which is currently not available," said Dr. Eugenio Galindo, oncology and hematology specialist. "Like we have said before, this is not the first cancer facility that we have opened, but it's the latest in treatment for cancer."

Galindo said patients will no longer need to travel long distances to receive care. He said the Cancer Center would be working in conjunction M.D. Anderson Cancer Center for the benefit of local patients.

The M. D. Anderson Cancer Center is located in Houston and is recognized as one of the world's most respected centers devoted exclusively to cancer patient care, research, education and prevention.

"We are also going to provide those services to north Mexico where there is also a need," said Galindo, who earned a fellowship at M.D. Anderson and has served as a faculty member in that division. "We have all the features of those hospitals in the larger cities, and they (DHR) are proud to bring the latest in care for cancer."

"This facility really needs no one to speak for it, because it speaks for itself," said Dr. Lawrence Gelman, DHR's CEO. "No other nation could have a community of this size that would have a facility as advanced as this. No other nation has such advanced technology available to so many."

DHR hopes to open its new Women's Center in September, and hopes to open its upcoming Behavioral Health by spring 2008.



Rep. Veronica Gonzales speaks at the ribbon-cutting for Doctors Hospital at Renaissance's new Cancer Center

# CANCER CENTER AT RENAISSANCE

