American Oncology Network Joins Forces with Rapides Cancer Center to Expand Cancer Services

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Rapides Regional investing $10 million to enhance cancer program

Alexandria, La., Jan. 20, 2022 – Rapides Cancer Center and American Oncology Network are joining forces to provide advanced, comprehensive and convenient care for patients in Central Louisiana.

A Division of American Oncology Partners, Hematology Oncology Clinic (HOC) at Rapides will begin seeing patients in January in a new clinic inside Rapides Cancer Center located on the campus of Rapides Regional Medical Center. Rapides Cancer Center is a Division of Rapides Regional Medical Center and has been accredited by the Commission on Cancer since 1972.

HOC at Rapides will be part of the American Oncology Network, a growing medical oncology provider with a focus on supporting the long-term viability of cancer treatment in communities across the country. With AON support and ancillary services, HOC at Rapides will provide improved access to advanced oncology care in Central Louisiana. AON includes an expanding team of 105 physicians providing care at numerous locations in 16 states.

The HOC at Rapides team will include Medical Oncologists Michael Castine III, M.D., Pavani Ellipeddi, M.D., Christopher McCanless, M.D. and Gerald Miletello, M.D. and Nurse Practitioner Kasey Gill. This will be HOC's third location in Louisiana, joining clinics in Baton Rouge and Zachary.

"This partnership represents a new day in cancer care for our community," said Jason Cobb, Chief Executive Officer of Rapides Regional Medical Center. "Our community will be able to receive world-class care based on a patient-centered care model without having to leave home. With the recent Rapides Cancer Center renovations and upgrades in technology, we are proud to offer Central Louisiana cancer care on a higher level than ever before."

Rapides Regional Medical Center is investing $10 million to enhance its cancer program. The upgrades include the first TrueBeam linear accelerator in Central Louisiana to provide the latest technology in radiation oncology. Coming in early 2022, RRMC will open the Rapides Breast and Diagnostic Center and install the first 64-slice PET CT Scanner to be located in a cancer center in Louisiana, allowing oncologists to pinpoint the precise tissue location of tumors.

The 7,700 square-foot HOC at Rapides practice is expected to open in mid-January. The state-of-the-art facility will include six exam rooms and 14 chemotherapy chairs, and will offer infusion therapy, including chemotherapy and immunotherapy, an in-house laboratory performing all routine blood work on-site and an in-house specialty pharmacy. Patients will have access to clinical trials, care management support, including nutrition guidance, Oncology Care Model participation and financial counseling.

"The entire Hematology Oncology Clinic at Rapides team is committed to enhancing the patient experience in order to have a greater impact on those who need care," said Dr. Castine. "We hope to create the type of experience that patients expect and deserve, placing them at the very pinnacle of cancer care today."

HOC at Rapides is committed to providing the community with the highest quality care that is based on research, evidence-based medicine and focused on the whole person. Cancer patients will now have access to a diverse range of services for diagnosis, treatment, clinical trials, survivorship, patient support and amenities under one roof, giving them unparalleled access to comprehensive, integrated cancer care, close to home.

"A key differentiator of AON is flexibility for our partner practices," said AON Chief Executive Officer Todd Schonherz. "Hematology Oncology Clinic at Rapides is able to leverage AON support for pharmaceutical purchasing strategies, revenue cycle, payer negotiations, human resources and technology to form a strong hospital partnership that will enable practice growth while bringing comprehensive cancer care services to Alexandria residents."

"With these entities joining forces, it will advance the mission of both organizations," said Cobb. "Together, we are transforming the future of cancer care in our region and it is our cancer patients who will reap the benefit of this partnership."

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About American Oncology Network, LLC: (AONcology.com)
American Oncology Network, LLC (AON) is an alliance of physicians and seasoned healthcare leaders partnering to ensure the long-term success of community oncology. Launched in 2018, the rapidly growing AON network represents 105 physicians and 79 nurse practitioners and physician assistants practicing across 16 states. The executive management team of AON brings more than three decades of oncology practice management experience, enabling physicians to focus on what matters most – providing the highest quality care for patients.

The organization provides unique and comprehensive protocols for managing administrative procedures and enhancing ancillary services for its affiliates. AON is able to aggregate volume and attain economies of scale, as it guides its member physicians and practices through the transition to value-based reimbursement models that improve the patient experience and help to reduce the per-capita cost of cancer care.

AON also provides a unique model of physician led, community-based oncology management. With services such as a centralized specialty pharmacy, diagnostics, pathology, fully integrated electronic medical records, a care management team and a variety of financial assistance programs, an alliance with AON ensures that patients' experiences will be at the very pinnacle of cancer care today.

About Hematology/Oncology Clinic: (HOCBR.com)
Specialists in the diagnosis and treatment of blood disorders and cancer, Hematology Oncology Clinic (HOC) serves patients from offices in Baton Rouge, Zachary and Alexandria. HOC is the practice of Dr. Gerald Miletello, Dr. Christopher McCanless, Dr. Michael Castine, III and Dr. Pavani

Ellipeddi. The practice's highly trained and experienced clinical staff consists of Nurse Practitioners, Oncology Certified Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses.

HOC's exceptional quality care includes access to innovative clinical trials, an in-house specialty pharmacy, timely labs and pathology reports, and on-site infusion therapy. The practice also offers comprehensive supportive care such as access to Care Management, nutrition counseling, and much more.

About Rapides Regional Medical Center: (rapidesregional.com)
Rapides Regional Medical Center is a 380-bed acute care hospital located in Alexandria, La., providing healthcare on a higher level for families in approximately 16 central Louisiana parishes. Our mission is to provide high quality, efficient and compassionate health care services for our patients and community through the efforts of our employees, physicians and volunteers.

Rapides Regional Medical Center has provided state-of-the-art, comprehensive medical services to our community for 118 years. Our campus is home to Rapides Women's and Children's Hospital, Rapides Cancer Center, Rapides Outpatient Center, Rapides Regional Trauma Center, 51-bed emergency department, NICU, PICU and ICU. Read about these services and more at rapidesregional.com.

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