NIU to offer proton beam therapy

June 22, 2008 SUN-TIMES NEWS GROUP

WEST CHICAGO -- Northern Illinois University will break ground Thursday on the state's first proton beam cancer therapy center.

Thursday's groundbreaking ceremony will celebrate the start of construction of the $159 million project, which will conduct research and provide treatment for cancer patients.

The Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board gave the go-ahead in late February for Northern Illinois University to purchase $160 million in equipment for the Northern Illinois Proton Treatment and Research Center.

It's located at 777 Discovery Drive, at the DuPage National Technology Park, just north of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory.

The nonprofit center will be ready for patients in 2010 and is projected to treat 1,500 people per year.

Proton therapy has never before been available in Illinois. The treatment is an advanced and very effective form of radiation, treating the cancer with proton beams.

Proton therapy, noninvasive and painless, is preferred in treating many adult and pediatric cancers.

Proton therapy is a form of radiation that stops at the targeted tumor, delivers a high dose of cancer-killing radiation and causes less damage to healthy tissues than traditional X-ray radiation.

It has been especially effective in treating prostate, head, neck and pediatric cancers because it spares nearby vital organs.

Two others have been proposed for the Chicago suburbs. Central DuPage's proposal was denied by the state planning board in early April. The hospital wanted to build a proton therapy center for cancer treatment in Warrenville.

Invasive methods unnecessary for prostate cancer radiation therapy treatment planning
From Science Codex

External-beam radiation therapy for localized prostate cancer linked to other cancer
From Science Codex

The views expressed in these blog posts are those of the author and not of the Sun-Times News Group.