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## **PeaceHealth United General Medical Center set to expand and improve Cancer Center services**

SEDRO-WOOLLEY, Wash. – Faced with growing demand for cancer treatment and a desire by patients to receive that care close to home, the PeaceHealth United General Cancer Center has launched plans to increase capacity, expand services and upgrade equipment.

The centerpiece of the plan is replacing the center's 17-year-old linear accelerator (LINAC) with a new, high-precision LINAC device called the [Varian TrueBeam](#). The highly versatile, targeted technology offers the most advanced radiation therapy treatment for cancer patients, giving clinicians the ability to tailor treatments for each patient's unique condition.

"This represents a huge leap forward in the speed, power and precision of the radiation therapy we provide here at United General," said Lisa Hazard, MD, one of two radiation oncologists working in the Cancer Center. "The TrueBeam uses advanced radiation therapy to treat cancers in a targeted fashion while protecting healthy tissue. We are so excited to be able to offer this level of treatment to our patients, right here in Sedro-Woolley."

The TrueBeam provides a noninvasive alternative to traditional surgery, improving the accuracy and treatment of tumors that are often difficult to treat surgically, such as those in the brain,

lung, spine, prostate or elsewhere. It generates 3-D images in 60 percent less time than other imaging technologies and can reduce a patient's X-ray dose by 25 percent. The TrueBeam offers tumor tracking in real time to ensure the radiation beam accurately targets the tumor and avoids normal tissue.

Chris Johnston, chief administrative officer at PeaceHealth United General, noted that the hospital continues to buck the trend in rural-urban cancer disparities. "While many small, more remote communities face barriers to access comprehensive cancer care, United General has continued to invest in cancer specialists, advanced equipment and a full range of support services," he said.

That investment carries on a legacy of exceptional cancer care dating back to the 1975 founding of what was then called the North Puget Cancer Center at United General Hospital. Under the leadership of Nicholas Muff, MD, the center grew to serve a five-county region, offering the latest chemotherapy and radiation treatment as well as a variety of related therapies. A pioneering radiation oncologist, Dr. Muff worked at United General for more than 30 years and in 1985 oversaw installation of the region's first linear accelerator.

The new LINAC is scheduled for installation in 2024. Additional upgrades include new carpet, updated bathrooms and fresh paint. Long-range plans include additional chairs for chemotherapy infusion, private suites and space for additional support services.

Local pharmacist Chris Schaffner received care at the Cancer Center after being diagnosed with Stage 3B Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2018. "Having a facility of this caliber in Sedro-Woolley is a huge gift for this community," he said. "The convenience of receiving this level of care within 10 minutes of my house was amazing. My care experience at United General was second to none. I truly don't believe I could have received better care anywhere else in the world. There is no substitute for knowing your nurses' names or for the entire staff knowing yours."

The Cancer Center expansion at PeaceHealth United General is being funded through a mix of PeaceHealth capital funds, grants and philanthropy. Thanks to the generosity of donors, some of them current or former patients, 81 percent of a \$1 million fundraising goal has already been met. The United General Hospital Auxiliary launched the campaign with a generous leadership gift; additional leadership donors include the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust; Dr. Nicholas and Sue Muff; and Burlington-based TRICO Companies. Seattle-based VECA Electric & Technologies has committed to holding an annual benefit golf tournament for the Cancer Center for the next

five years.

For more about cancer services, visit [www.peacehealth.org/locations/sedro-woolley/cancer-center-peacehealth-united-general-medical-center](http://www.peacehealth.org/locations/sedro-woolley/cancer-center-peacehealth-united-general-medical-center).

To learn more about donation opportunities, visit <https://www.peacehealth.org/foundation/united-general> or click on the QR code below.



About PeaceHealth: PeaceHealth, based in Vancouver, Wash., is a not-for-profit Catholic health system offering care to communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. PeaceHealth has approximately 16,000 caregivers, a group practice with more than 1,200 providers and 10 medical centers serving both urban and rural communities throughout the Northwest. In 1890, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace founded what has become PeaceHealth. The Sisters shared expertise and transferred wisdom from one medical center to another, always finding the best way to serve the unmet need for healthcare in their communities. Today, PeaceHealth is the legacy of the founding Sisters and continues with a spirit of respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice in fulfilling its Mission. Visit us online at [peacehealth.org](http://peacehealth.org).

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