



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Cancer Center Heralded as True Community Project at Groundbreaking**

(Slidell, La. –Aug. 5, 2009)—One-stop, world-class cancer treatment close to home will soon be a reality for Gulf South residents. Slidell Memorial Hospital (SMH) today broke ground on its new regional cancer center in Legacy Medical Park, 1150 Robert Blvd., next to the SMH Founder’s Building, during a morning ceremony celebrated by hospital staff, community leaders and dignitaries. The center is scheduled to open in late 2010.

Cost estimates for the construction and equipment for this cutting-edge facility are just over \$19 million, approximately \$3 million under the initial budget. St. Tammany Parish voters overwhelmingly approved in 2007 the hospital’s referendum to rededicate a 2003 bond millage to allow for the cancer center’s construction.

Making an analogy to baseball, Chief Executive Officer Bob Hawley described the attributes required to become a great team or a great organization: “Practice hard, be a team player, eliminate mistakes, be patient and when the ball comes your way take advantage of the opportunity.

“Just like in baseball, the people of this community took advantage of the ball being hit their way,” Hawley said. “The lives that will be enhanced by this team of outstanding healthcare professionals practicing in this facility will provide many people the opportunity to experience countless future moments of joy that would otherwise be lost. We promised a regional, state-of-the-art cancer center and here we are. This is truly a community project, for without you it would not have happened.”

Matthew McElveen, MD, radiation oncologist and medical director of the new center, said the cancer center will place nearly every cancer care service and discipline in one location. “In order for cancer treatment to be successful, three things must exist: state-of-the-art care, organization of the disciplines involved, and simplicity of use by the patients. Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology, Chemotherapy infusion, Lab services and many others will be in this facility along with patient supportive services such as a resource library and an appearance center to help patients deal with the cosmetic issues involved in cancer care.

“The center will house the most advanced technology including the latest in radiation equipment and treatment techniques, an expanded and up-to-date chemotherapy infusion center all housed in a building designed and decorated to instill comfort and serenity in the mind of the patient,” McElveen added. “The greatest benefit the cancer center will bring to patients in Slidell and the surrounding area is confidence, confidence that his physicians have the knowledge and skill to define and offer the best therapy; confidence that the equipment and technology involved are the best available; in short, confidence that he is getting the best care possible.”

AE Design of Marietta, Ga., an architectural firm that specializes in oncology and diagnostic imaging facilities, was selected to design the 51,483 square-foot, three-story facility. AE Design has established itself among the nation’s leading specialists in the field, completing more than 100 oncology facility projects in the world. Citadel Builders of Metairie, La., was recently named General Contractor for the project, which is expected to support as many as 200 construction jobs over the coming 12-15 months.

SMH's Cancer Program is nationally accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. The hospital has secured leases with two medical oncology physicians groups for the center and all doctors working in the center will be focused on the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and related diseases, allowing for increased collaboration and coordination of care.

SMH received a AA rating from Standard and Poors (S&P) and A+ rating from Fitch for its General Obligation Bonds, Series 2009 in the amount of \$17.5 million for construction of the Cancer Center. Due to the "strong financial performance" of the hospital, as noted by S&P in its credit report, these excellent ratings, in addition to G.O. Zone bond classification, will save the taxpayers more than \$4 million on the project.

#### **ABOUT SMH**

Slidell Memorial Hospital is a full-service 182-bed acute care not-for-profit community hospital located at 1001 Gause Blvd., in the heart of Slidell. Founded in 1959, SMH is the third-largest employer in St. Tammany Parish, employing 1,100 full, part-time and pool clinical and administrative employees. SMH serves as a primary healthcare resource for families in St. Tammany Parish, La.; Pearl River County, Miss.; and the greater Mississippi Gulf Coast region. It is located online at [www.slidellmemorial.org](http://www.slidellmemorial.org).

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