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Garden City, Henry Ford sign contract for oncology services

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Garden City Hospital has signed a clinical agreement for oncology services with the Henry Ford Medical Group that is expected to lead to more advanced care at the 176-bed osteopathic teaching hospital.

Saju George, CEO of Garden City Hospital, said Henry Ford physicians at the hospital will help expand access to cancer care for patients and provide patients with clinical research opportunities and medical residents with additional learning experiences.

"There is a strong community need (for cancer care) because it is a prevalent issue in the state," said George. "We thought we could with the right partner solve community need and keep patients right here as much as possible."

Besides expanding services for the Garden City community, George said the partnership was needed because Stephen Goldfarb, D.O., a hematologist and oncologist for 35 years, is retiring this year. Garden City also has several other oncology specialists on staff, he said.

George said he believes oncology volume will increase steadily at Garden City because state and national statistics on cancer shows continued high numbers. Cancer is the second-leading cause of death after heart disease. About 1,600 people die each day in the U.S., according to the American Cancer Society.

In Michigan, 57,000 new cancer cases are annually diagnosed, said the American Cancer Society. Leading types of cancer in Michigan are prostate, lung and breast, said according the state Department of Health and Human Services.

Robert Chapman, M.D., Henry Ford's director of hematology and oncology, will oversee coverage at Garden City, which has been undergoing a \$35 million construction project after being acquired by for-profit Prime Healthcare of California three years ago.

Since April 1, Chapman's team of six physicians and four nurse practitioners and physician assistants have been providing inpatient and outpatient clinic services at Garden City. Chapman said Garden City is the first non-Henry Ford hospital to be served by medical group physicians under this type of clinical contract.

Henry Ford doctors staff all-day clinics at Garden City, three days each week, seeing an average of 15 patients each day, Chapman said. Henry Ford physicians also round on inpatient floors and consult on about eight patients per day. The agreement includes 24-7 on-call coverage, he said.

"The volume didn't surprise us because we looked at Dr. Goldfarb's schedule. The thing that surprised us more than else is there is a lot of pathology there for a small hospital of 175 beds," Chapman said. "Patients have real and significant cancer problems who can really benefit from our specialists. It has been a very mutually satisfying and edifying arrangement."

New equipment

George said about \$500,000 of new equipment, including a endoscopic transfronchial ultrasound, has been purchased to expand oncology care. Chapman said Henry Ford needed upgrades of Garden City's ambulatory clinic computer system and automated dictation services to document cases.

Garden City currently offers patients medical oncology, infusion therapy and radiation oncology services, George said.

Another advantage to having Henry Ford doctors, said George, will be that some Garden City patients with advanced cancer cases can be treated in Detroit at Henry Ford Hospital's oncology department.

On patient transfers, Chapman said physicians are trying to minimize the need for moving patients to Henry Ford Hospital for advanced treatment.

"Most things can be just as well done there as here," he said. "We are working with nursing and pharmacy staff to keep patients there. Obviously, if a

patient needs a bone marrow transplant, only a few places (like Henry Ford) can do that in state."

Chapman said several patients from Garden City have been transfered to Henry Ford for major surgical cancer interventions.

George said another advantage to working with Henry Ford is they will be able to tap into advanced clinical research trials and give the hospital's 91 medical residents additional teaching opportunities.

"Research is something that takes more preparation than ordinary patient care, but it is one of the things our physicians are doing," Chapman said. "We have a large menu of situations where a patient maybe a candidate for clinical trial. We clearly can offer that care and opportunities."

Chapman said Henry Ford doctors also are helping Garden City residents with their training on inpatient floors and in the outpatient clinics.

"One of the comments by a physician leader (at Garden City) said they had noticed since we came there that the notes and documentation by residents had become more thorough and edifying," Chapman said. "That was nice to hear."

Besides Chapman, physicians Thomas Doyle, Ahmad Mattour, Jawad Sheqwara, Vijaya Donthireddy, Joseph Won, and Philip Kuriakose will be available. Also, nurse practitoners Catherine Carroll and Cynthia Ulreich, along with physician assistants Celina Kirsch and Janell Wilcox.

Chapman said Henry Ford has recruited an additional physician who will be staffed exclusively at Garden City.

Earlier this month, Garden City Hospital opened a new elective interventional cardiovascular program to perform coronary angioplasty procedures. The hospital was granted a certificate-of-need to conduct the service. Garden City also has a patient transfer agreement with Detroit Medical Center and St. John Providence Health System as part of the CON requirement.

Garden City also has expanded its heart services to include peripheral artery procedures and a limb preservation clinic.

In 2014, the 176-bed osteopathic hospital in [Garden City was acquired by for-profit Prime Healthcare](#), one of the nation's fastest-growing health care chains with 44 hospitals, including Lake Huron Medical Center in Port Huron. [Garden City is completing a \\$35 million overhaul](#) of its hospital operations.

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