



## News Release

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### **General Assembly establishes University Cancer Research Fund at UNC** Funding will improve quality of life for cancer patients, families statewide

CHAPEL HILL – The North Carolina General Assembly created the state’s first University Cancer Research Fund with the passage of the new state budget. The fund, established to accelerate the battle against cancer at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s School of Medicine and its Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, will receive \$25 million in 2007-2008 and is slated to increase to \$50 million per year beginning in 2009.

Gov. Mike Easley signed the budget bill, Tuesday, July 31, 2007.

“There are 41,000 new cancer cases and 17,000 deaths annually in North Carolina, and more than 560,000 annual deaths nationally. Cancer is an economic, social and personal burden for our state and affected families,” said Dr. William L. Roper, dean of the School of Medicine and chief executive officer of the UNC Health Care System.

With this new funding, the UNC School of Medicine and UNC Lineberger are poised to become an international leader in cancer research, Roper said. The research funding will serve to improve the quality of life and treatment of cancer patients statewide and enhance UNC’s access to science and technology. It will also increase UNC Lineberger’s ability to discover and disseminate knowledge across the spectrum of cancer research, and make real improvements in prevention, early detection and therapies that will benefit all North Carolinians.

“We are extremely grateful to the members of the General Assembly and Governor Easley for providing this groundbreaking funding. It will allow our University’s great researchers to make significant advancements against a disease that has touched the lives of so many North Carolinians,” Roper said.

“Our legislators have sent a clear signal about the value they place on building even more momentum in Chapel Hill for strengthening the faculty’s capacity to conduct life-changing research and improve patient care,” said UNC’s chancellor James Moeser. “The research fund will further enhance the state’s wise investment in the North Carolina Cancer Hospital, the University, the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and UNC Health Care.”

“Last year alone, we saw 15,000 cancer patients, representing every one of our state’s 100 counties. We want to lead the way in combating cancer at home and around the world. As one of only a few states with a dedicated comprehensive cancer research fund, I am confident that our institution will excel in developing novel and more individualized regimens of care for cancer patients,” Roper said.

The fund will enable interdisciplinary research in three major areas by creating a statewide cancer assessment and prevention program, continuing to undertake groundbreaking basic and translational research and enhancing multidisciplinary clinical care and research teams.

“With the support of the General Assembly for construction of the North Carolina Cancer Hospital in 2004, and now this extraordinary cancer research fund, UNC has been provided an opportunity and a challenge – to become the nation’s best university cancer center,” said Dr. Shelley Earp, UNC Lineberger’s director.

“We must and will develop pathways to move prevention, early detection and therapeutic research into the clinic and the community, the outcome of which will be improved statewide cancer care, grounded in the latest research findings, and available to all North Carolinians,” said Earp.

The number of cancer visits to UNC Health Care has doubled in the last nine years. Over the next 30 years, the number of cancer patients in the state will again double. Because of the N.C. General Assembly’s action, UNC’s North Carolina Cancer Hospital will become a hub to help the state address this increasing health care problem, Earp said.

“The National Cancer Institute is extremely gratified to learn of the General Assembly’s commitment to making a difference in the lives of those afflicted with cancer. UNC Lineberger is one of the outstanding cancer centers supported by NCI that conduct groundbreaking clinical research and provide state-of-the-art cancer care,” said NCI Director Dr. John E. Niederhuber. “Having the state government make a long-term investment in decreasing the burden of cancer and, ultimately, the burden of cancer health care costs, is truly visionary.”

“As a cancer survivor, the University Cancer Research Fund makes me optimistic about a solution to cancer,” said Kate MacIntyre, a UNC Health Care lung cancer patient who lives in Davidson. “The state of North Carolina is putting a stake in the ground, emphasizing the importance of cancer research to make very real progress under a dedicated program unlike any we have ever had. North Carolina is saying ‘We can do this.’”

### **UNC Health Care System**

The UNC Health Care System is a not-for-profit integrated health care system owned by the state of North Carolina and based in Chapel Hill. It exists to further the teaching mission of the University of North Carolina and to provide state-of-

the-art patient care. UNC Health Care is comprised of UNC Hospitals, ranked consistently among the best medical centers in the country; the UNC School of Medicine, a nationally eminent research institution; community practices; home health and hospice services in seven central North Carolina counties; and Rex Healthcare and its provider network in Wake County. For more information please go to [www.unchealthcare.org](http://www.unchealthcare.org).

### **UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center**

As part of the UNC system, UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center is the public comprehensive cancer center for the state and the people of North Carolina. The center's mission is to reduce cancer occurrence and death in North Carolina and the nation through research, treatment, training and outreach. Center faculty treat cancer patients, conduct research into the causes of cancer, develop and direct statewide programs in cancer prevention and train future physicians, nurses, scientists, and public health professionals. In 2009 UNC Health Care will open the new North Carolina Cancer Hospital, the clinical home of UNC Lineberger. For more information please go to <http://unclineberger.org>.

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