



# MIDWEST'S BEACON OF HOPE: FIRST COMMUNITY ONCOLOGY PRACTICE IN THE NATION TO BE NAMED A COMPREHENSIVE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR THERANOSTICS



Photography provided by Siemens Healthineers

## Nestled in the heart of the Midwest, stands a beacon of hope and innovation in cancer care.

In April, Nebraska Cancer Specialists earned the distinguished title of the first medical oncology practice in the region to be listed as a Comprehensive Radiopharmaceutical Therapy Center of Excellence for delivering theranostics in an outpatient setting. The distinction is awarded to treatment sites that are leading the growth in radiopharmaceutical therapy, who have experienced care teams in administering multiple therapies, and who are actively engaged in research. This not only highlights NCS's commitment to cutting-edge cancer treatment, but also marks a significant milestone in the journey towards personalized medicine.

Theranostics, a blend of therapy and diagnostics, represents the future of cancer care. It involves using advanced diagnostic tools to determine the unique characteristics of a patient's cancer, followed by tailored treatments that specifically target those characteristics. This personalized approach ensures that each patient receives the most effective treatment with the least amount of side effects.

Nebraska Cancer Specialists has been at the forefront of this medical revolution. Beginning more than 35 years ago, NCS has always prioritized patient-centered care. The journey towards becoming a Center of Excellence began in 2018 when Dr. Sam Mehr, NCS

nuclear oncology physician, recognized the potential of theranostics to transform cancer treatment here in Nebraska.

"Theranostics has been approved as an effective method of treatment in Europe for many years. With it being more commonly used here in the US, and now in the Midwest, it's a game changer," Dr. Mehr explains. "Theranostics allows us to understand the intricacies of each patient's cancer and craft a treatment plan that's as unique as their fingerprint. It's about moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach to something much more precise and effective."

The state-of-the-art theranostics center at NCS is equipped with the latest in diagnostic technology, including advanced imaging techniques and genetic testing tools. "Both the imaging and genetic testing tools allow our team to pinpoint the exact nature of the cancer a patient is dealing with," said Scott Degenhardt NMAA, Director of Radiology & Theranostics. "Once the diagnosis is known, tailored treatments are then developed to attack the cancer at its core, attracting to the tumor like iron filings on a magnet to kill the tumor cells."

One of the most remarkable aspects of this treatment here at NCS is the commitment to making these types of advanced treatments accessible in an outpatient setting. This means patients can receive world-class care without the need for prolonged hospital stays.

For many patients, this translates to a significant improvement in quality of life, allowing them to spend more time at home with their families and less time in a hospital. We have even gone so far as to perfect the delivery of the treatment and take it on the road. The theranostics team travels to the NCS central Nebraska clinics twice a month to deliver theranostics to patients in the Grand Island, Kearney, and Hastings area.

"This recognition places NCS among an elite group of medical facilities nationwide that are leading the way in cancer treatment," said Dr. Mehr. "For the people of the Midwest, having such a renowned facility in their backyard is a



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source of reassurance. It means access to the latest in cancer care innovations without having to travel to far-off cities. It means hope."

As the field of theranostics continues to evolve, NCS remains cutting edge, continually incorporating new advancements and techniques. Our vision is clear: we are committed to care, and dedicated to discovery. We stand proud to provide the highest quality of personalized cancer care to every patient who walks through our doors.

In a region known for its resilience and strength, Nebraska Cancer Specialists stands as a symbol of what's possible when compassion meets innovation. "We're not just treating cancer; we are redefining the future of oncology care, one patient at a time," states Dr. Mehr.