

IU gets \$14 million gift to create program focused on symptom management

Indiana University School of Medicine received a \$14 million gift from the Walther Cancer Foundation to create a supportive oncology program that goes beyond standard therapies such as surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation.

The program, named the Walther Supportive Oncology Program, will seek to care for a patient's overall physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

As part of For All: The Indiana University Bicentennial Campaign, the gift will receive matching funds from Indiana University.

The Walther Supportive Oncology Program will be developed in partnership with Indiana University Health. It is also intended to influence care for cancer patients and their families throughout Indiana and the country by providing expertise and best-practices for other health systems to model, with particular attention to the underserved in our communities.

The gift from Walther is establishing five endowed faculty positions that will enable IU School of Medicine to hire a nationally recognized leader in the field of supportive oncology to direct the program; a senior leader in psychiatry or psychology who focuses on individuals with cancer; and at least three other faculty experts in related disciplines. As part of the program, IU Health and IU School of Medicine will invest in additional staff to complement existing services.

The Walther Supportive Oncology Program will also place an emphasis on research in areas such as physician-patient communication, care coordination, symptom management and the long-term effects of cancer on survivors. This includes laboratory research to predict which patients will suffer side effects to specific therapies and how to mediate them, and to discover treatments that are less toxic. The program will also include an educational component to train the next generation of clinical leaders in supportive oncology.