

Clinical trials launch at OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center

OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center [Moeller Cancer Center](#) in Alton is looking for patient feedback about navigating cancer care through a newly announced clinical research program, commonly known as a clinical trial.

The clinical trials are a cooperative with [Cancer Research For The Ozarks](#), a fellow faith-based organization headquartered in Springfield, Missouri. The trials are the product of years of preparation, training, and earned accreditations and are the latest effort by OSF Saint Anthony's to bring the best care close to home.

OSF Saint Anthony's providers are screening patients for eligibility for one of two initial trials focusing on cancer care delivery. One study will help patients and their spouses understand the costs of cancer care.

"As research shows, many patients don't get the treatment they deserve and that they need because of the cost itself," said Leah Watson, Clinical Research Coordinator at OSF Saint Anthony's. "They can't afford it. They can only afford it for so long. The co-pays are high. So this is very important to focus on for those patients."

The other clinical trial will track possible shortages of cancer-treating drugs at the OSF Saint Anthony's pharmacy and how that may affect patient care, such as delays in treatment.

Watson said at least one more clinical is planned to start soon at the Moeller Cancer Center. There, patients will get cancer treatment to stimulate their immune system, and officials will track the patients' progress.

"Offering these treatment trials to patients will allow for, hopefully, future new treatments for patients. So getting them involved, they are contributing to the research to hopefully find more cures for cancer," Watson said.

It's not known how long the trials at the cancer center will last, as Watson noted some clinical trials go on for years.

Dr. Manpreet Sandhu is a medical oncologist and hematologist at OSF Saint Anthony's.

"Everything that we know about cancer treatments and diagnosis is ultimately achieved from investigations through clinical trials," Dr. Sandhu said. "Certain medications or testing has to be approved through the FDA [Food and Drug Administration] to be able to be generally used. But [OSF Saint Anthony's is] now wanting to be a part of that process where we can be in the process in helping in developing the drugs and developing new treatments."

Dr. Sandhu also remarked that OSF Saint Anthony's is the only health care group in Riverbend offering clinical trials on-site.

"Our older patients or patients who have to rely on their kids to drive them to Saint Louis, sometimes they are not representative in these studies because they have barriers to access, barriers to care," Dr. Sandhu said of off-site studies.

OSF Saint Anthony's patients who want to learn more about the clinical trials can contact Watson at (618-) 433-7613 or leah.c.watson@osfhealthcare.org.