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Making the Cancer Journey More Comfortable for Teens at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey
Teen Lounge to Undergo Facelift Thanks to Generous Donation from Alicia Rose Victorious Foundation

New Brunswick, N.J., December 9, 2008 – Teens undergoing treatment in the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) are in for a treat in the new year, as the space they frequent known as the “teen lounge” is undergoing a facelift to make the latest in technology and other comfort items available to them. The refurbishment comes courtesy of an \$11,500 gift to the Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation from the Alicia Rose “Victorious” Foundation, which initially funded the creation of the room in 2005. CINJ is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Prior to that time, if you were a teenager undergoing treatment, you most likely sat with much younger children, who were engaged in the latest kid’s movie, playing with toys and doing arts and crafts. It was soon recognized that teens needed a space of their own in which to e-mail friends, complete school work, talk with others their own age or just relax. Mario and Gisele DiNatale founded the Alicia Rose “Victorious” Foundation (www.victoriousfoundation.org) in honor of their teenage daughter, Alicia, who lost her life to a rare form of cancer. To honor Alicia’s love of life they have been establishing teen lounges in cancer centers and hospitals throughout the country along with gifting a Teen Kit filled with comfort items and a Bandana Pillow to each newly diagnosed teenage patient.

The current teen lounge, which consists of a computer/desk area, couch, television and video game console, will be reconfigured to allow for more personal space, and to upgrade desktop computers to laptops to allow more comfort for those teens who are being treated intravenously. Age appropriate movies and magazine subscriptions also will be part of the upgrade along with microbial-treated furniture, which is considered ideal for an immuno-compromised setting.

“Sometimes it is the small creature comforts of home that can really help teens during their treatment,” said Richard Drachtman, MD, interim chief, Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at CINJ and professor of pediatrics at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. “In the sickle-cell population alone, we have over 325 patients. About 40-percent of that number are teens. This gift from the Alicia Rose ‘Victorious’ Foundation will have a tremendous impact.”

Paula Hunchar, executive director of the CINJ Foundation, notes, “The continued generosity and special mission of the Alicia Rose ‘Victorious’ Foundation is heartwarming. Their recognition of the unique needs of teenagers will allow our teenage patients to enjoy a space that is just for them while at CINJ. The lounge provides normalcy and comfort during a difficult time.”

The CINJ Foundation raises funds to support cancer research, treatment, prevention and education programs of CINJ. Gifts are received from corporations, foundations, individuals, special events and through planned gifts. To make a tax-deductible gift to New Jersey’s only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center call 732-235-8614 or visit www.cinjfoundation.org.

About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (www.cinj.org) is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. To support CINJ, please call the Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation at 1-888-333-CINJ.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Partner Hospital: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital*, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Morristown Memorial Hospital, Overlook Hospital, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ-Hamilton), Saint Peter's University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. *Academic Affiliate

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