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Cancer Center Will Open

In September, facility will open at Idaho Falls hospital

When Kenneth Stokesberry was first diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2003, he didn't know any fellow survivors he could talk to or what to expect from treatment.

He gleaned most of his information from doctors and relied on family and friends to cope with the disease. At the time, there was no central place where local cancer patients could find support groups or detailed information about treatments and services available here.

As of Sept. 9, that will no longer be the case. That's when the American Cancer Society's Cancer Resource Center opens its doors inside Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center's cancer treatment building at 3245 Channing Way.

The center's goal is provide all types of information to cancer patients, from treatments and where to find them to helping them find transportation and lodging to navigating them through their insurance coverage.

The center was funded by proceeds raised during the recent Relay for Life event at Thunder Stadium, which raised about \$65,000.

"I really didn't have any support other than family and friends," Stokesberry said. "The cancer center is a great resource. It's amazing how much the little things can help."

The center is designed to be a resource, not a treatment facility. No one will undergo chemotherapy or radiation there. They will, however, be able to get advice on how to find help for paying for cancer drugs and information about clinical trials.

"The Cancer Resource Center was designed for volunteers to help cancer patients," said Tina VanderMeer, chairwoman of the center's board. "The center is not for treatment, but a way for cancer patients to get information on how to cope with their disease."

During the center's Sept. 9 grand opening, volunteers, including Stokesberry, will provide tours and answer questions.