

# NIU takes over Fermi's cancer treatment center

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BATAVIA — Northern Illinois University on Monday announced plans to reopen Fermilab's cancer treatment center.

The university established the NIU Institute for Neutron Therapy to operate the facility.

Until May 2003, the treatment center had been operated under the direction of hospitals.

The institute will be able to continue treating patients, while its affiliation with the university will permit doctors to perform more research.

The facility uses neutrons siphoned off Fermilab's proton linear accelerator for the radiation treatments.

Neutron radiation has been found to be more effective on certain types of cancers than traditional electrons or photons.

Patients treated with neutron radiation typically require 12 treatments over four weeks, compared to 30 treatments over eight weeks for other methods.

The neutron beam is applied to malignant tumors that appear anywhere in the body and are otherwise inoperable or resistant to conventional radiation.

Fermi's cancer center has treated more than 3,100 patients since it began operations in 1976.

NIU officials estimate that it can treat as many 145 patients a year. Plans are to begin seeing patients next month.

U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert has secured \$2.7 million in federal money to pay for the institute over the next three years.

The NIU Institute for Neutron Therapy will be one of three in the nation to offer neutron therapy.

NIU tapped Aidnag Diaz to serve as the center's medical director. He previously served in the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, N.Y.

Diaz said that, while Fermi's cancer center has attracted patients from across the county and around the

world, he hopes to find more patients from northern Illinois and neighboring states.