

Dear Friends, Patients, Families, and Supporters,

When I reflect on where we are today compared to five and ten years ago, I am overwhelmed with pride. Together, we have built something truly special. What began as a vision to transform cancer care in Louisiana has become a growing reality—one defined by innovation, collaboration, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to the people we serve.

Over the last 5 years we've seen a tremendous increase in new cancer patients receiving care through our program. That growth represents far more than numbers. It reflects increased access to life-saving care close to home, allowing patients to remain surrounded by family and support systems while receiving world-class treatment. It is also a testament to the extraordinary physicians, nurses, researchers, and staff who have earned the trust of patients throughout Louisiana and beyond.

We have continued to push the boundaries of what is possible in cancer care. Our Phase I Clinical Trials Program is enrolling patients and already delivering promising outcomes by providing access to cutting-edge therapies that are not widely available elsewhere. We have strengthened and expanded Neuro-Oncology services, advanced our Bone Marrow Transplant and Cellular Therapy Program at UMC New Orleans, and built a truly comprehensive lung cancer program with state-of-the-art capabilities spanning prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. We are also proud to have established Louisiana's first fully functional and growing Cancer Genetics Program, helping patients and families better understand inherited cancer risk while advancing prevention and personalized care for future generations.

This growth has been intentional. We have recently completed construction, functionally tripling our clinic space and expanded our infusion suite. We have welcomed talented physicians and advanced practice providers across multiple specialties, expanded our clinical footprint, and increased our capacity to meet the needs of a growing population. Our multidisciplinary care model—long championed by outstanding teams such as Breast Cancer and ENT and gynecology—has become a hallmark of our cancer program and continues to expand into Lung, Gastrointestinal, and Genitourinary Oncology. At the same time, we have focused relentlessly on improving the patient experience. Access to care has improved through reduced wait times for appointments, imaging, and treatment. Patients benefit from comprehensive support services, including nutrition counseling, social work, our GARNET (menopause and sexual health) program, and oncology psychology services, which provide critical symptom support, guidance and reassurance during some of life's most difficult moments.

This year brought important external validation of the work being done across our cancer program. The Commission on Cancer reaccredited our program and did so with tremendous enthusiasm and praise. Surveyors specifically highlighted the remarkable progress achieved since their previous visit and recognized our innovative food pantry and food security initiatives as models they hope to see replicated nationally. We continue to advance additional accreditations, including NAPBC and FACT, while pursuing one of our most ambitious goals: National Cancer Institute designation under the LSU-LCMC Cancer Center umbrella. With UMC New Orleans serving as the adult clinical site for this

transformational effort, we are laying the foundation for a future in which Louisiana patients have access to the highest level of cancer care, research, and innovation without leaving our state.

Education, discovery, and innovation remain central to our mission. Our fellowship programs continue to train the next generation of cancer specialists who will care for patients throughout Louisiana and beyond. UMC New Orleans has become the research crown jewel of our healthcare system, accounting for nearly 88% of all cancer clinical trial enrollments and more than 94% of treatment trial enrollments across the system in 2025. Through the dedication of the LSU-LCMC Clinical Trials Office, our investigators, research nurses, study coordinators, and support teams, tomorrow's treatments are reaching patients today. The LSU-LCMC cancer biobank, which is housed at UMCNO, services the system and has processed biospecimens for thousands of patients, is accelerating scientific discovery that will influence cancer care for years to come. We are building more than a cancer center—we are building a destination for cancer care, a center of excellence for Louisiana, and most importantly, a source of hope.

What makes me most proud is not simply what we are building, but why we are building it. Our mission has always been rooted in serving our community and ensuring that every Louisianan has access to exceptional cancer care when they need it most. As our program continues to grow, we remain steadfast in our commitment to access, equity, and excellence. We are determined to create a world-class cancer program that belongs to all of Louisiana—a place where innovation and compassion meet, where discovery drives progress, and where every patient is treated with dignity, respect, and hope. Thank you for your trust, your support, and your belief in what we are building together. The future is bright, and our best days are still ahead.

Sincerely,

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