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Avera to Build Cancer Center in Pierre Thanks to Helmsley Donation

PIERRE, S.D. (Aug. 23, 2016) – Today, Avera announces plans to build a new cancer center in Pierre, thanks to up to \$10 million in grant funding from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

The new home for Avera Cancer Institute in Pierre will be named the Helmsley Center, and it will house state-of-the-art cancer care as well as clinic space for primary and specialty care.

Today, Walter Panzirer, Trustee for the Helmsley Charitable Trust, announces a donation of \$7.5 million that will go toward construction of the new building, plus a new linear accelerator for radiation treatment, specialized infusion chairs, and a TUG robot that delivers medications including chemotherapy to care units in the hospital and cancer center.

The Helmsley Charitable Trust also announces a \$2.5 million dollar-for-dollar challenge matching grant. The Avera St. Mary's Foundation will launch a fundraising campaign in 15 counties in central South Dakota to meet the \$2.5 million challenge through donations of area individuals, families and businesses. This is the first time the Helmsley Charitable Trust has offered a challenge match in South Dakota and the Avera system.

The new Helmsley Center will be constructed between Avera St. Mary's Hospital and Avera Medical Group buildings. Construction is planned to begin next summer, with an estimated opening date of late fall 2018.

Local residents and stakeholders identified cancer care as one of the three prominent needs in the 2016 Community Health Assessment conducted by Avera St. Mary's, alongside chronic conditions associated with obesity and mental health.

"The Helmsley Charitable Trust has made a distinct commitment to strengthen health care in rural locations, and improved cancer care is a well-documented need in the Pierre area," Panzirer said. "Pierre is unique in that it is our state capital and an important city in our state, and yet its geographical location isolates it from more populated areas by hundreds of miles. We see bringing a cutting-edge cancer center to Pierre as a very worthy project that will help improve the future health of this community and the surrounding area. We are excited to see this project take shape."

The Rural Healthcare Program of the Helmsley Charitable Trust has funded over \$296 million in grants throughout the upper Midwest. One of the program's goals is for people who live in rural America to

have access to quality health care as close to home as possible. To this end, the Trust has funded linear accelerators, digital mammography machines, CT scanners, and telemedicine equipment at hospitals across the upper Midwest.

"Avera has benefited in many ways through a partnership and collaboration with the Helmsley Charitable Trust that amounts to more than \$80 million, as we have joined forces to bring advanced medical expertise and technology to rural areas. This is extraordinary and we are tremendously grateful. We are honored that the Helmsley Charitable Trust is entrusting us with resources to deliver world-class cancer care in Pierre," said John T. Porter, President and CEO of Avera Health. Other Avera projects funded by the Helmsley Charitable Trust include Avera eCARE™ telemedicine program that reaches 263 sites; radiation oncology technology in Sioux Falls, Aberdeen and Mitchell; digital mammography equipment; CT scanners; and more.

The local campaign, "Building Dreams. Building Hope. Building Here," will begin soon. "We hope area residents will see the \$2.5 million dollar-for-dollar challenge match as a rare opportunity to benefit generations to come," said Mikel Holland, MD, President and Chief Medical Officer of Avera St. Mary's Hospital. "We are counting on others to follow the generous example of the Helmsley Charitable Trust and invest in a future that includes excellent health care, right here at home."

About The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust

The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust aspires to improve lives by supporting effective nonprofits in health, place-based initiatives, and education and human services. Since the Trust began active grantmaking in 2008, it has committed more than \$1.5 billion for a wide range of charitable purposes. The Trust's Rural Healthcare Program funds innovative projects that use information technologies to connect rural patients to emergency medical care, bring the latest medical therapies to patients in remote areas, and provide state-of-the-art training for rural hospitals and EMS personnel. To date, this program has awarded more than \$296 million to organizations and initiatives in the upper Midwest states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Minnesota, Iowa and Montana. For more information, visit www.helmsleytrust.org.

About Avera Health

Avera Health is an integrated health system comprised of more than 330 locations in 100 communities in a five-state region. A full continuum of care is offered through 33 hospitals, 200+ clinics, retirement communities, home care, sports and fitness centers, with award-winning care in 60+ medical specialties. With more than 16,000 employees and physicians, Avera is the largest private employer in South Dakota. Avera is distinguished through technology and innovation. We are home to the world's most extensive telemedicine network and a world-class genomics program that translates the latest cancer research directly to patient care. As a health care ministry, we carry on the legacy of the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters, delivering care in an environment guided by our values of compassion, hospitality and stewardship. For more information about Avera, see our website at Avera.org