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## **UF Health Proton Therapy Institute receives two donations from THE PLAYERS Championship**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (Sept. 26, 2018) — A new 14-passenger shuttle bus for patient transportation and a \$5,000 donation to enhance the social programming for adolescents and young adults who are being treated for cancer was received by the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute from THE PLAYERS Championship during the annual Red Coat Ride Out.

THE PLAYERS volunteer leadership – the Red Coats – presented the gifts on Tuesday as part of its record \$9 million charitable outreach in Northeast Florida, funds generated by the annual professional golf tournament held in Ponte Vedra Beach.

The UF Health Proton Therapy Institute has a van to transport patients and their caregivers, primarily children and their families, who stay at the Ronald McDonald House, to and from their daily treatments. “Many of our patients are from other countries or cities, and navigating unfamiliar roadways is an unnecessary stress for them,” said Stuart Klein, executive director of the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute. “The shuttle service is part of the comprehensive social support we have in place to help patients cope with their treatment and reserve their energy for healing,” he said.

The UF Health Proton Therapy Institute has treated more than 650 adolescents and young adults and 1,600 children. It has the largest pediatric proton therapy program in the world, treating on average 25 children per day.

“In the United States, cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death in young people age 15-39,” said Daniel J. Indelicato, M.D., the William and Joan Mendenhall Endowed Chair of Pediatric Radiotherapy and associate professor at the UF College of Medicine. “For many cancers, this age range has seen little improvement in survival over the past four decades. Some of this is related to poor understanding of patient and tumor biology that distinguishes cancers in this population. But adolescents and young adults also have unique needs and often feel out of place in an oncology network designed for children and older adults. If we can create a



supportive environment more tailored to adolescents and young adults, it will improve their ability to cope with treatment, and ultimately, we hope, improve their outcomes," he said.

Proton therapy is an advanced form of radiation therapy that can effectively target tumors and reduce side effects. For young people whose bodies are still growing and developing, proton therapy offers the advantage of reducing the amount of radiation in healthy tissue which may reduce the incidence of health complications and secondary cancers later in life.

"We are deeply grateful to the THE PLAYERS and the Red Coats for your generosity," said Klein. "Your gifts will make a positive impact on the patients entrusted to our care."

THE PLAYERS was among the early donors who made the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute possible. Since opening in Jacksonville in 2006, more than 7,700 patients have walked through THE PLAYERS Championship lobby at the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute.

The UF Health Proton Therapy Institute is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization affiliated with the UF College of Medicine and the UF Health Cancer Center, a Florida Cancer Center of Excellence, dedicated to delivering state-of-the-art cancer treatment and setting new standards for treating and curing cancer. The cancer treatment facility houses both conventional radiation and proton therapy, and delivers proton therapy to 100 patients a day. For more information about the UF Health Proton Therapy Institute, please visit [www.floridaproton.org](http://www.floridaproton.org), or call toll-free 877-686-6009.

Each year, money generated by THE PLAYERS Championship benefits more than 300 charities throughout Northeast Florida. This year, THE PLAYERS eclipsed more than \$100 million generated for charity since the event moved to Ponte Vedra Beach in 1977, including a record \$9 million generated in 2018.

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