

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2026



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Highlands Oncology Opens Expanded Clinical Trials Suite

New integrated research environment brings cutting-edge therapies, advanced diagnostics, and streamlined patient care closer to home

Springdale, Arkansas—

Highlands Oncology will host a special grand opening ceremony on May 20 to celebrate the opening of its expanded Clinical Trials Suite — a major investment designed to advance patient access to innovative cancer therapies and strengthen the future of community-based oncology research.

While Highlands Oncology has participated in clinical research for more than 26 years, the newly expanded suite represents a significant evolution in how clinical trials are delivered to patients in Northwest Arkansas and the surrounding region. “This is the culmination of almost 30 years of work, created from the ground up”, says Dr. Thaddeus Beck, Medical Director and Senior Partner at Highlands Oncology. “We have been pioneering research here in Northwest Arkansas since the beginning... it’s been a passion project. But – our clinical trials suite and all that we have been able to put together here, is at a new level.”

The program currently supports approximately 150 active clinical trials and includes nearly 60 full-time research personnel alongside embedded university partnerships, student rotations, and collaborations with major pharmaceutical sponsors.

The new Clinical Trials Suite officially began seeing patients in January 2026 and was intentionally designed to streamline the complex workflow associated with research participation. Unlike traditional clinical visits, research patients often require highly coordinated labs, imaging, provider visits, treatment administration, and study-specific testing — all under strict timelines and protocols.

To improve efficiency and reduce patient burden, Highlands Oncology developed a “one-stop” research model where multiple study activities are coordinated into a single visit.

Patients enter through the first floor and are navigated directly to the new clinical trials suite on the 4th floor, where visits are carefully organized to minimize delays and reduce unnecessary movement throughout the facility. By co-locating research, infusion, laboratory, and treatment services, patients wait only once during their visit rather than navigating multiple appointments across different locations.

The suite includes five dedicated exam rooms, a specialized procedure room, an in-house research laboratory, infusion capabilities, and a newly opened research pharmacy that is planning for full investigational drug preparation operations, pending final approvals.

The facility also supports high-volume, specialized laboratory operations, routinely processing and shipping research specimens to pharmaceutical and research partners around the world.

“This level of infrastructure is uncommon in a community oncology setting,” says Dr. Beck. “Patients often assume they must travel to large academic institutions to access innovative therapies or participate in groundbreaking research. Our goal is to bring those opportunities directly to our community.”

The research program includes a broad range of emerging therapeutic modalities, including:

- bispecific and trispecific therapies
- antibody-drug conjugates
- personalized cancer vaccines
- oncolytic agents
- mRNA and DNA-based therapies
- injectable radioligand therapies

The center has also participated in personalized therapeutic vaccine studies that use a patient’s own tissue and blood samples to create individualized vaccines following standard treatment.

In addition to therapeutic trials, the program is actively engaged in innovative diagnostics and imaging research. The site is currently piloting a laser-based device developed in collaboration with university partners to monitor localized treatment response without requiring repeated whole-body scans.

Research leaders say these advancements reflect the growing role of community oncology programs in accelerating innovation while improving patient access to care.

“Clinical trials are not simply about research,” said Jeff Hunnicutt, CEO. “They are about providing hope, expanding options, and ensuring patients can receive tomorrow’s treatments today — close to home, surrounded by their families and support systems.”

The May 20 event will include remarks from Highlands Oncology leadership and members of the clinical research team, along with tours of the new suite and opportunities for media interviews and photography.

Ceremony Details:

Wednesday, May 20, 2026
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
3901 Parkway Circle

Springdale, AR 72762

About Highlands Oncology:

Highlands Oncology is an independent, multi-site cancer care organization delivering world-class oncology services throughout Northwest Arkansas and the surrounding region. Through an integrated, patient-centered approach, Highlands is designed to meet the complex needs of patients at every stage of the cancer journey.

Bringing together medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology, advanced clinical research, diagnostic imaging, infusion services, oncology rehabilitation, pharmacy, and comprehensive supportive care programs, Highlands provides Arkansans access to some of the most advanced cancer treatments and technologies available — close to home.

Highlands Oncology remains deeply committed to serving Northwest Arkansas and surrounding communities by delivering advanced cancer care with precision, compassion, and excellence.

Media inquiries or questions, please contact:

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