

## (March 2007) Northern Illinois University Joins Proton Community

Northern Illinois University Joins Proton Community: Wins Endorsement From Key Congressional Leaders for New Treatment and Research Center

[http://www.proton-therapy.org/north\\_ill.htm](http://www.proton-therapy.org/north_ill.htm)

What do ten congressional leaders from Illinois have in common besides being from the same state? They have all strongly endorsed proton therapy and especially the development of a world-class proton treatment and research center in Chicago's western suburbs about 35 miles west of downtown Chicago. Starting with U.S. Senator and democratic presidential candidate, Barack Obama (D-III), to former Speaker of the House, Congressman Dennis Hastert (R-III), they all pledged to work on behalf of Northern Illinois University's proton therapy project now in development and scheduled to start treating patients in 2011.

"Our Illinois representatives in Congress are of one voice on the NIU project," noted President John Peters. "They understand the necessity of bringing proton therapy, a technology that was advanced decades ago at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, back home to Illinois. The treatment and research center will be a major resource for cancer patients, as well as for students in numerous health-related fields, and further establish the state as a worldwide leader in health care technologies."

NIU has already received some initial federal funding for the planning phase of a non-profit proton center at the DuPage National Technology Park in West Chicago. The park is close to the northern boundary of Fermilab, where the first proton accelerator was designed and built for Loma Linda University Medical Center, the world's first clinically-based proton facility. NIU's center will total about 100,000 square feet of space on 13 acres of tech-park land.

Senator Obama said: "I commend the leadership at NIU for seeking to make this life-saving technology available in Illinois. I fully support the project and look forward to working with NIU to make this plan a reality." Congressman Hastert noted: "While thousands of patients have realized the benefits of this cancer treatment, proton therapy is currently unavailable in Illinois."

The other members of the Illinois congressional delegation supporting proton therapy include: Rep. Don Manzullo (R-III), Rep. Melissa Bean (D-III), Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-III), Rep. Danny Davis (D-III), Rep. Ray LaHood (R-III), Rep. Judy Biggert (R-III), Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-III) and Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-III).