

PHYSICIANS GIVE SUPPORT IN LARGE DOSES TO SOMERSET MEDICAL CENTER'S CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Somerville—For Kathleen Toomey, M.D., an oncologist affiliated with Somerset Medical Center, rallying financial support from her fellow physicians for the hospital's "Breaking New Ground" capital campaign was easy. Dr. Toomey was a member of a specially-appointed committee to reach out to Somerset Medical Center's medical and dental staff.

"The doctors already knew how great a place the medical center is for both physicians and patients," says Dr. Toomey, who also serves as Co-chair of Somerset Medical Center's Cancer Committee, Chair of its Institutional Review Board, and Medical Director of Somerset Valley Visiting Nurse Hospice at Somerset Medical Center. "The physicians here, along with the employees and administrators, are an extremely philanthropic community. The gifts have been very generous."

So generous, in fact, that the doctors have donated more than \$2.2 million to the campaign to date — the largest contribution ever from a New Jersey hospital's medical staff. This extraordinary support includes individual gifts of \$25,000 and up and contributions as much as \$1 million from physician groups.

"We took a very personal approach with colleagues," Dr. Toomey says. "Many of our meetings were in the morning over coffee in the hospital's coffee shop."

"Breaking New Ground" is the largest fund-raising campaign in Somerset Medical Center's 104-year history. The money will be used for a major expansion project that will include a new emergency department, inpatient oncology and medical/surgical pavilions and new ambulatory surgery facilities.

According to Dr. Toomey, the new inpatient oncology unit in her area will offer a host of amenities for patients as well as physicians. Patients will benefit from all private rooms furnished with flat-screen televisions, refrigerators, laptop capability and overnight accommodations for their families. For physicians, more meeting rooms, additional computers and an updated health information technology system will increase efficiency and enhance communication. "We're moving toward a paperless system, so this facility renovation is critical. Our architecture will match our technology and we'll be ahead of state of the art," attests Dr. Toomey.

"The physicians at Somerset Medical Center have overwhelmingly demonstrated their support," notes John Von Stade, Chairman of Somerset Medical Center Foundation. "Our medical staff's participation has been vital to the campaign's success and because of their philanthropy and the generosity of other caring individuals, we will continue to meet the region's growing health care needs."

Why is it important for the medical center's doctors to be involved with development initiatives in addition to delivering care? "This is our community," says Dr. Toomey. "We identify so much with Somerset, especially as a place to go to when our own families need care."

For more information on the "Breaking New Ground" campaign, call Somerset Medical Center Foundation at 908-685-2885, or visit the Foundation page of the medical center's Web site at somersetmedicalcenter.com.