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Danbury Proton renews push for cancer treatment center

By Michelle Tuccitto Sullo



RENDERING | CONTRIBUTED A rendering of the proposed proton therapy facility in Danbury.

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Danbury Proton LLC has filed a new certificate of need application with the state Office of Health Strategy to establish a proton therapy center for cancer treatment. The estimated \$90 million center, if approved, would be at 85 Wooster Heights Road, in Danbury. The OHS previously denied Danbury Proton's plan, citing factors such as the financial feasibility of the project.

Danbury Proton re-applied for the certificate of need, or CON, in documents filed Nov. 6. Drew Crandall, a spokesperson for Danbury Proton, said communication between it and OHS has been "significantly enhanced," under OHS' leadership since Dr. Deidre Gifford took over as executive director. "In connection with this re-application, we will continue to work with OHS staff to develop a proposal that OHS can support," Crandall said.

Proton therapy uses a high energy beam of protons to target cancer. Proponents say it allows for safer and targeted delivery of radiation, with less impact on healthy tissue and fewer negative side effects. "The reduced side effects of proton therapy allow physicians to prescribe higher doses to tumors, resulting in improved control of the cancer," the application states. Crandall said the need for proton therapy in Connecticut is "huge."

"Right now, the closest facilities are in Boston and New York City, and they are turning away patients," Crandall said. "They cannot handle the existing regional patient need."

The Yale New Haven Health system and Hartford HealthCare have secured OHS approval for an unrelated proton beam therapy center in Wallingford. Crandall asserted there is enough demand in the state for both facilities.

"Our original estimate for Danbury Proton in April of 2020 was \$80 million, but with the delays, inflation and construction cost increases, our current estimate is \$90 million," Crandall said. "We do not have concerns about funding, which will be accomplished through bonds."

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For more information, please visit [**DanburyProton.com**](https://www.DanburyProton.com).