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## **Federal Health Minister Hermann Gröhe visits the German Cancer Research Center and the National Center for Tumor Diseases**

**This year, the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) celebrates its 50th anniversary, and the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg celebrates its 10th anniversary. On the occasion of this joint anniversary, Federal Minister of Health Hermann Gröhe made a visit to both institutes in Heidelberg.**

“Cancer research is currently going through an exciting and vibrant phase,” said Professor Otmar Wiestler, Chairman of the Management Board and Scientific Director of the DKFZ, in welcoming the minister. “Never before has it been possible to translate so many research results into clinical applications so rapidly. A prerequisite to achieving enhancements for patients is the close collaboration of excellent cancer research and cancer medicine. To this end, we established the NCT 10 years ago as an institution with a model character for the whole of Germany; it is also setting new standards in the care of cancer patients.”

Dr. Susanne Weg-Remers, head of the DKFZ’s Cancer Information Service, explained why it is so important to provide neutral and independent information for people affected by cancer. Health Minister Hermann Gröhe said: “Supporting cancer patients and their families with quality information is an important goal of the National Cancer Plan. The Cancer Information Service was established to offer comprehensive patient-oriented information about all matters relating to cancer.”

Professor Olaf Witt briefed the minister about plans for a project called INFORM, which aims to open up a second avenue towards cures for children who suffer from recurrent cancer. Physicians and scientists participating in this project plan to search across Germany for a drug that precisely targets the tumor of each child with recurrent cancer. The basis for this effort is a comprehensive analysis of the changes in a tumor’s genetic information at the time of the relapse.

Subsequently, the Federal Minister met with members of the board of directors of the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) and with Professor Guido Adler, Chief Medical Director of the University Medical Center Heidelberg. With NCT directors Professor Christof von Kalle, Professor Dirk Jäger, Professor Cornelia Ulrich and Professor Wolfgang Wick, the Health Minister talked about the new chances that personalized cancer medicine is offering to patients. The NCT aims to offer individualized treatment for each of its cancer patients based on molecular analyses of the genomes of their individual tumors.

Concluding his visit, Gröhe resumed: “Thanks to the DKFZ and the NCT, Heidelberg has assumed a leading position worldwide in cancer research and cancer medicine. It is a good thing that this model is now being transferred to seven other sites in Germany within the German Cancer Consortium.”

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 3,000 employees is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany. At DKFZ, more than 1,000 scientists investigate how cancer develops, identify cancer risk factors and endeavor to find new strategies to prevent people from getting cancer. They develop novel approaches to make tumor diagnosis more precise and treatment of cancer patients more successful. The staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. Jointly with Heidelberg University Hospital, DKFZ has

established the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg, where promising approaches from cancer research are translated into the clinic. In the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research (DKTK), one of six German Centers for Health Research, DKFZ maintains translational centers at seven university partnering sites. Combining excellent university hospitals with high-profile research at a Helmholtz Center is an important contribution to improving the chances of cancer patients. DKFZ is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers, with ninety percent of its funding coming from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the remaining ten percent from the State of Baden-Württemberg.

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