FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 29, 2016

For further information contact:
Cynthia Hall, Director of Public Affairs and Marketing
University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford
815.395.5920
cyhall1@uic.edu

Grant received to continue to promote early detection of lung cancer

The University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford has been awarded a grant of $50,000 by the Dr. Louis & Violet Rubin Fund of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois to continue work on early screening of lung cancer. Dr. Neelu Puri, Associate Professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, will be the Principle Investigator in this grant.

Last year, Dr. Neelu Puri began a collaborative effort with OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center Patricia D. Pepe Center for Cancer Care, the Department of Pathology at the University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System Chicago, Mercyhealth, SwedishAmerican a Division of UW Health, the Winnebago County Health Department, the National Center for Rural Health Professionals, and Health Systems Research to enhance early screening of lung cancer in our community. In 2014, 204 deaths were reported out of 245 cases of lung cancer in Winnebago County. The high mortality is likely due to late clinical diagnosis. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) proposed new guidelines for early screening of lung cancer in individuals aged 55-80 with a smoking history of 20 cigarettes a day for 30 years.

Beginning last year, Dr. Puri and her collaborators conducted seminars and provided educational materials to the general public and area physicians to promote and implement the CDC guidelines.

“Having additional funding to continue this initiative will allow this group to continue this important work and to attempt to translate these findings to clinical applications for improved detection and prognosis of lung cancer patients in Winnebago County which could potentially also be applied nationally,” said Alex Stagnaro-Green, MD, MHPE, Dean of the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford.

“We are proud of our long-term relationships with the local health systems and community organizations,” Stagnaro-Green said. “The grant from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois will give us additional resources to allow Dr. Neelu Puri, to continue to collaborate on this initiative.”

Since 1972, the College of Medicine at Rockford has focused on building an academic medical institution committed to education, research and innovation, and clinical service in the surrounding communities. The College has become a center for internationally recognized research efforts funded through grants awarded by government agencies, private foundations and other resources. Today, the Rockford Campus is a regional health sciences center, home to the regional College of Pharmacy program, the College of Nursing advanced
degree program, the master's in medical biotechnology program, a public health certificate and Health Systems Research.

The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois is a regional leader in philanthropy. Its mission is to attract, grow, and preserve an endowment for the needs of the people of Northern Illinois.

# END #