UR expert refutes cell phone danger

A prominent researcher's warning that cell phone use can cause cancer is unfounded, said the director of the University of Rochester Medical Center's brain and spinal tumors program on Thursday.

Kevin Walter refuted the well-publicized claim issued by Dr. Ronald B. Herberman, director of the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute. In an unprecedented warning, Herberman said Wednesday that unpublished data show such high risk of cancer that people need to keep cell phones away from their heads and avoid using them in public places, where others can be exposed to the phone's electromagnetic fields.

"There is no evidence at all that cell phones cause brain cancer," responded Walter, questioning Herberman's use of unpublished data.

Walter said the amount of radiation emitted from cell phones is so small that "the chance it has any ability to do anything, I think, is very remote."

Walter said many of his patients ask him whether cell phone use can lead to cancer, but he tells them they should focus their attention on the real health dangers of cell phones: talking while driving.