

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

**WILL ROGERS INSTITUTE, VARIETY CHILDREN’S CHARITY AWARD \$25,000 TO UMMC’S NICU**

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JACKSON, Miss. — The Will Rogers Institute and Variety, the Children’s Charity of the United States, awarded a \$25,000 grant to the state’s only Level IV neonatal intensive care unit at the University of Mississippi Medical Center Aug. 22.

Todd Vradenburg, executive director of WRI and Ron Krueger II, Variety board member and president and chief operating officer of New Orleans-based Southern Theatres, presented the check to Dr. Rick Barr, Suzan B. Thames Professor and Chair of Pediatrics, Dr. Sajani Tipnis, associate professor of neonatology and medical director of the NICU, and Billy Needham, Newborn Center nurse educator, who applied for the grant.

“We’re so happy to have been able to work with Variety and bring this grant together,” Vradenburg said.

The funds purchased two Sentec Transcutaneous CO2 monitors along with several months’ worth of supplies. The monitor reports CO2 levels and other respiratory trends on a minute-to-minute basis via a probe placed on the baby’s chest, avoiding the need for repeated blood tests.

“We have many small patients where vascular access is an issue,” Tipnis said. “We have outstanding staff that does a very good job, but sometimes you just can’t get that line. In those cases, these machines are going to help up non-invasively monitor these babies.”

UMMC is among 14 recipients of grant money from the Will Rogers Institute this year. Last year, WRI committed \$400,000 in grants for neonatal intensive care units to purchase much-needed equipment.

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### **About The University of Mississippi Medical Center**

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's health-care enterprise includes five hospitals and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's population. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at (601) 984-1100 or click [here](#).

### **About The Will Rogers Institute**

The Will Rogers Institute is a program of the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation, a charity, named after one of the greatest humanitarians, philanthropists and entertainers that ever lived, Will Rogers. Originally a hospital for tuberculosis-stricken vaudevillians, The Will Rogers Memorial Hospital became a national training facility for doctors treating patients with tuberculosis and the Will Rogers Institute was created. Currently, the WRI perpetuates the legacy of Will Rogers as a national charitable health program dedicated to the support of research in debilitating lung disorders, medical school training fellowships, and recently becoming a national leader in providing life-saving neonatal ventilator equipment to hospitals throughout the United States. For more information, visit [www.wrinate.org](http://www.wrinate.org).

### **About Variety – the Children's Charity of the United States**

Variety – the Children's Charity of the United States is an association of 21 chapters nationwide that offer financial assistance and services to children who are disabled and disadvantaged, as well as organizations that serve youth with special needs. Under three core programs, our goal is to make sure no child is left behind in reaching theirs. The Freedom Program grants children independence, self-esteem, inclusion, mobility, and communication. The Care Program grants children survival, recovery, well-being, and health. The Future Program grants achievement, confidence, education, and experiences. Find out more at [www.usvariety.org](http://www.usvariety.org).