

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

GOV. PHIL BRYANT, UM CHANCELLOR DAN JONES BREAK GROUND FOR NEW SCHOOL OF MEDICINE BUILDING

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Photos can be found here.

JACKSON, Miss. – Governor Phil Bryant, University of Mississippi Chancellor Dan Jones and other state and local dignitaries unveiled plans and broke ground today on a \$63 million building that will permit larger class sizes at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine.

The event marked significant progress toward Bryant's goals of bringing more physicians to Mississippi and growing the state's health-care economy. In October, Bryant directed \$10 million in Community Development Block Grant funding to the University of Mississippi Medical Center to launch the effort.

The new 151,000 square-foot building will provide state-of-the-art, flexible and technology-rich classrooms and laboratories. The new space will allow the School of Medicine to increase its incoming class sizes from 135 students per year to more than 165. The five-story building is scheduled for completion in 2016.

"I am thrilled to break ground on this expansion of the School of Medicine," Gov. Bryant said. "Mississippi is in need of more bright, skilled physicians to provide quality medical care to our residents and to those patients from other states who seek outstanding care in Mississippi, and this state-of-the-art expansion will allow us to provide better training to even more students.

"Not only will this help us reach our goal of training more physicians to provide better health-care access, these new doctors will create a significant economic impact in the communities where they practice. I have said before that health care is an industry of necessity, and Mississippi is taking an important step today to proactively grow its health care economy."

UMMC projects that the larger class sizes accommodated by the new facility will generate about \$1.7 billion in economic impact in Mississippi by 2025 and that the additional physicians trained will support more than 19,000 new jobs by the same year. The current economic impact of practicing UMMC-trained physicians is more than \$6.3 billion annually, and those physicians are estimated to support more than 60,000 jobs in the state.

Current School of Medicine facilities are cramped, outdated and spread between numerous facilities on and off campus. The oldest are in UMMC's original 1955-era building.

Dr. Dan Jones, University of Mississippi chancellor, said the new facility will improve the Medical Center, entire university and the state's health outlook.

"The university is interested not only in being a fine institution, but also in making a difference in people's lives. Because of this new medical school, lives will be changed in Mississippi," Jones said.

Philip Gunn, speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives, said he understands the importance of producing more physicians for the state, and training them in cutting-edge facilities.

"On behalf of the legislature, we pledge to do everything we can to support this new medical school," Gunn said.

Dr. James Keeton, UMMC vice chancellor for health affairs and School of Medicine dean, said the new building will help address Mississippi's medical needs.

"Today's ceremony marks a defining step in building the space we need to train Mississippi's next generations of physicians. This new School of Medicine facility directly addresses our mission to educate health-care providers for Mississippi's vast medical needs," Keeton said. "We're grateful to Gov. Bryant, the state Legislature and Mississippi Development Authority for recognizing how training more physicians for Mississippi will impact the state's economy, and we're glad to continue working with the state's leadership to improve the future of health care in Mississippi."

Gov. Bryant worked closely with the Mississippi Economic Council to develop a comprehensive strategy for growing Mississippi's health care economy, and increasing the state's capacity to train physicians is key component of the plan.

"Blueprint Mississippi's Health Care as an Economic Driver study focuses on the importance of building our capacity of physicians, and the new medical school is a ground breaking effort toward both attracting and training the best and the brightest," said Blake A. Wilson, president and CEO of the Mississippi Economic Council, the state Chamber of Commerce. "It is another world class visionary move toward putting our state in the place of greatest opportunity."

During the 2012 legislative session, Gov. Bryant signed into law House Bill 317 to establish more medical residency programs throughout the state, a move that will allow more Mississippi-trained physicians to remain in the state. This session, Bryant will continue to pursue efforts to increase the number of physicians practicing in Mississippi's most medically underserved communities.

The school of medicine expansion is expected to create about 930 jobs during construction.

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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 in the University Hospitals and Health System, 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 visit us on the Web at [umc.edu/publicaffairs](http://umc.edu/publicaffairs)