

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

NEW UNIVERSITY HEART FACILITY OFFERS WIDE SCOPE OF CARE AND EFFICIENCY UNDER ONE ROOF

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JACKSON, Miss. – University Heart, a new diagnostic and treatment facility at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, is offering patients a full scope of heart care services under one roof that makes for a more efficient and customer-friendly experience.

The three-story building adjacent to University Hospital began receiving its first patients in July. Patients who formerly visited offices scattered through the UMMC campus can now make one simple stop.

The Medical Center held a grand opening Thursday to celebrate the new center.

“This is a brand new, state-of-the-art, spacious facility that will make for a wonderful patient experience,” Dr. Michael Winniford, medical director of University Heart and a cardiologist in the School of Medicine, said of the 49,081-square-foot building designed by Cooke Douglass Farr Lemons Architects and Engineers. “It’s easily accessed because you can drive right up to the front for valet parking. There’s a spacious registration and waiting area.”

The \$15 million facility includes rooms for outpatient or overnight-stay cardiovascular procedures that formerly took place at the adult hospital. It’s strategically located steps away from inpatient heart care and the Emergency Department, and it complements Mississippi’s sole heart transplant facility and sole adult congenital heart program.

Said Dr. Bill Little, the Patrick Lehan Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and chair of the Department of Medicine: “We’re proud that we now have, in addition to having a cardiology faculty with specialty expertise and all the most advanced techniques and cardiac diagnosis and treatment, a world-class facility in a centralized location. It optimizes the patient experience.”

The building is designed to heighten customer service, said Bill Brown, UMMC’s administrator for cardiovascular services. “It’s very modern and very open, and it blends in nicely with the rest of the campus. It’s very light and airy and welcoming.”

The jewels of the center are its catheterization and electrophysiology laboratories – 32,000 of the center’s total square footage -- and equipment for non-invasive testing and minor surgical procedures. Patients undergo electrophysiology procedures such as implantation of pacemakers and cardiac defibrillators and catheter ablation for heart arrhythmia. They recover in one of the center’s cardiovascular beds, with an overnight stay if needed.

An array of cardiovascular diagnostic and treatment services are housed at the center, including stress testing, heart imaging, echocardiogram, cardiac catheterization, stent treatment, and coronary and peripheral angioplasty.

“The key point here is that University Heart and the entire cardiovascular and thoracic line is dedicated to providing care equal to such centers throughout the world, with similar excellent outcomes, but with a personal Mississippi touch,” said Dr. Jorge Salazar, professor of surgery and co-director of University Heart.

Ridgeland resident Floyd Sulser will visit the new center for follow-up procedures after undergoing quadruple heart bypass surgery in 2005. "I was under Dr. Barksdale's care then, and I still am today," Sulser, an attorney and sawmill business owner, said of UMMC cardiologist Dr. Bryan Barksdale. "He saved my life."

Barksdale talked him into getting a heart catheterization after he experienced some discomfort and other symptoms, Sulser said. "Sure enough, two arteries were blocked 98 percent. I had surgery the following day."

Today, Sulser sees Barksdale for echocardiograms and stress tests, two procedures he'd have today at University Heart instead of at the adult hospital. "I'd love that option," he said of the center. "We need to be spoiled as heart patients."

Not just the patient experience, but that of families was considered in the design, Little and Salazar said. "The procedure and post-procedure recovery areas are spacious and bright, with room for patients' families to be with them," Little said. "Those areas are in close proximity to where the procedures will be performed."

"We are able to do many minor vascular surgical procedures at the center that before were done in an operating room," Winniford said. "We will not be doing open-heart surgeries. We have very nice operating rooms for that in our adult hospital."

The center offers immediate care and access for heart-attack sufferers, Brown said. "Patients will be brought to University Heart for any necessary procedures. We have rapid, direct access through our elevators to University Heart," he said.

The center incorporates a new conference room for patient education and the teaching of medical students, residents and fellows. "This gives us, for the first time, a state-of-the-art training facility with full teleconference and audiovisual capability," Winniford said.

Patients will continue regular outpatient doctor visits at University Physicians offices on campus and in the metro area. University Heart is next to Parking Garage A just past the adult hospital.

"This is about treating our patients and their families as if they're our own," said Salazar, chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery who also co-directs the Children's Heart Center. "By investing in them, we can have the very best outcomes possible."

For more information about University Heart, call 601-984-5678.

Services and amenities of University Heart include:

- Non-invasive procedures such as electrocardiograms, cardiac sonography, stress cardiac sonography, exercise and pharmacological stress tests, and cardioversions
- Diagnostic and interventional cardiovascular procedures such as coronary and peripheral diagnostic services, coronary and peripheral interventions, electrophysiology diagnostic studies and interventions, and implantation of pacemakers and defibrillators
- Nine pre-procedure holding bays

- 17 post-procedure private rooms
- Two electrophysiology laboratories
- Three cardiovascular catheterization laboratories
- Close proximity to inpatient cardiac-care floors
- Seamless treatment for patients coming through UMMC's Emergency Department
- Training, meeting, classroom, and conference facilities
- Drop-off and valet parking

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