

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

## UMMC, MAYO CLINIC SIGN AGREEMENT TO INCREASE TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

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JACKSON, Miss. – The University of Mississippi Medical Center will partner with the renowned Mayo Clinic on a series of initiatives intended to convert laboratory discoveries into new therapies and train a new generation of medical scientists.

An agreement between the institutions, titled the Translational Research and Training Program for Clinician Scientists, was formally announced July 8 at UMMC during a visit from Mayo Clinic researchers. The agreement sets the stage for a wide array of possible collaborations in the future.

Through training, mentorship and research collaborations, the two institutions will look for ways to translate the understanding of diseases from basic-science research into clinically applicable methods, drugs, devices and therapies that will benefit patients.

"This agreement represents the completion of a couple years of effort toward extending current collaborations and the advent of new opportunities between our institutions," said Dr. John E. Hall, UMMC associate vice chancellor for research.

"UMMC has certain expertise and accomplishments and Mayo, as one of the most respected names in academic medicine, also has expertise and accomplishments in areas that are complementary to UMMC. The goal is to make a two-way street for training, research and learning opportunities."

The collaboration lays the groundwork for more specific collaborations, research and training agreements in the future.

For instance, Mayo and UMMC might exchange junior faculty members, post-doctoral fellows and residents so each can learn from the host institution's expertise. Collaborative research agreements could deepen the knowledge about a given disease, provide access to equipment and resources for clinician scientists and lead to development of drugs, therapies and medical devices that improve care for patients.

"Our combined expertise will enable us to work together to discover and implement new and better ways to improve the health of people and communities," said Dr. Robert Rizza, Mayo Clinic executive dean of research. "We look forward to collaborating with UMMC."

As a recipient of one of 46 national Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA), the Mayo Clinic has a strong translational research program. UMMC has significant basic-science expertise and unique epidemiological research programs especially in hypertension, cardiovascular disease and renal disease. But it is still working to develop its clinical research infrastructure.

"UMMC has the opportunity to develop leading clinical and population-research programs. We are strong in some areas of basic science research and need more translational and clinical investigations," Hall said.

The CTSA's are administered by the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Research Resources.

Researchers at the Mayo Clinic will gain access to the Mississippi patient population, which has some of the nation's highest rates of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, stroke and hypertension.

As well, Mississippi has an African-American population particularly affected by those diseases that otherwise would not be easily accessible for Mayo researchers, Hall said.

The importance of biomedical research to understand and reverse health disparities, particularly in African-American populations, can't be overstated. UMMC and two historically black institutions, Jackson State University and Tougaloo College, are a decade into the Jackson Heart Study. The study investigates cardiovascular disease among 5,300 African-Americans in Mississippi's Capital. It's the nation's largest longitudinal study of cardiovascular disease risk factors in African-Americans.

UMMC is also a principal site for the 20-year-running Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study, a larger population study, in which about a quarter of the 16,000 participants are African-Americans from the Jackson metro area.

Under the agreement, detailed arrangements could be more easily formed that give researchers at Mayo increased access to data and participants of the studies.

The agreement also formalizes ongoing research relationships between the two institutions. Investigators from Mayo and UMMC for several years have worked together on numerous projects. Those include research into hypertension-induced renal injury, the genetics of kidney disease, the genetics of microangiopathic brain injury as well as in research consultation, lectures, and symposia.

"This relationship sets up a wide platform for both institutions to work together," Hall said. "As more faculty members, fellows and residents find out about it, we'll see more projects, training and collaboration efforts."

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The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. University of Mississippi Health Care represents the clinical programs of the Medical Center and includes University Hospitals and Health System and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. 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 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 citizens. 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 <http://info.umc.edu/>.

Mayo Clinic is the first and largest integrated, not-for-profit group practice in the world. Doctors from every medical specialty work together to care for patients, joined by common systems and a philosophy of "the needs of the patient come first." More than 3,700 physicians, scientists and researchers, and 50,100 allied health staff work at Mayo Clinic, which has campuses in Rochester, Minn.; Jacksonville, Fla.; and Scottsdale/Phoenix, Ariz.; and community-based providers in more than 70 locations in southern Minnesota., western Wisconsin and northeast Iowa. These locations treat more than half a million people each year.

Established in 2006 with a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and substantial Mayo support, the Mayo Clinic Center for Translational Science Activities (CTSA) is a multi-disciplinary research and education center that provides training and mentoring, facilities and expert resources for research teams to support innovative clinical research and the process of turning research discoveries into real-world treatments. For more information about Mayo Clinic's CTSA, visit the Web site <http://ctsa.mayo.edu>.