

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

HOPE ON THE HORIZON PANEL TO DISCUSS LATEST ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH

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JACKSON, Miss. – Recognized experts on Alzheimer's disease will lead a panel discussion on the latest research findings that are giving scientists deeper insight into the causes of the disease and related dementias.

The discussion, Hope on the Horizon, and a video presentation from HBO's documentary, "The Alzheimer's Project," will be held on Tuesday, February 22 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center from 6:30-8 p.m.

The event will be on the second floor of the Norman C. Nelson Student Union on the UMMC campus. It is open to the public but seating is limited. Those interested in attending are encouraged to reserve a seat by calling (601) 984-2763.

The Alzheimer's Association Mississippi Chapter and UMMC's Memory Impairment and Neurodegenerative Dementia (MIND) Center have teamed up to present Hope on the Horizon. Experts from each organization – Dr. Heather Snyder, the Alzheimer's Association's senior associate director of medical and scientific relations, and Dr. Thomas Mosley, MIND Center director and professor of medicine – will be a part of the panel.

Hope on the Horizon represents the first collaboration between the MIND Center and the Alzheimer's Association Mississippi Chapter on a public event. With a strong relationship established, organizers look forward to addressing the threat of Alzheimer's disease together.

The event's panel, including Dr. James Irby of Methodist Rehabilitation Center, Dr. Ronald Schwartz of the Hattiesburg Clinic, Dr. George Patton of St. Dominic's Health Systems, and Dr. Mark Meeks of UMMC's Division of Geriatrics, will give audience members a thorough update on the direction of Alzheimer's and dementia research.

Currently an estimated 5.3 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, the Alzheimer's Association reported in a 2010 facts and figures paper. Of those, about 5.1 million are aged 65 or older. That means about one in eight people aged 65 or older have Alzheimer's disease.

As if that weren't reason enough for increasing the pace of Alzheimer's research, as the baby boomer generation advances in age, the incidence of Alzheimer's and other dementias will greatly increase. According to the association's report, by 2030 about 7.7 million Americans 65 or older are expected to have the disease.

"The number of Americans with Alzheimer's and other dementias is increasing every year because of the steady growth in the older population," the report stated. "By 2030, the segment of the U.S. population aged 65 years and older is expected to double. At that time, the estimated 71 million older Americans will make up approximately 20 percent of the total population."

By 2050, the number of Americans aged 65 or older who have Alzheimer's is projected to be between 11 million and 16 million – unless medical breakthroughs identify ways to prevent or more effectively treat the disease.

Along with age, other factors increase the risk of Alzheimer's and underscore the need for continued research. Older African-Americans are about twice as likely their Caucasian peers to have Alzheimer's and other dementias, and Hispanic-Americans are about one and a half times more likely. Women are more likely than men to develop Alzheimer's, as are people with fewer years of education.

The MIND Center is a major research initiative of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, and is directed by Mosley, a nationally recognized expert in brain aging. The MIND Center brings together some of the largest neuro-epidemiologic studies ever conducted, state-of-the-art brain imaging and powerful new genetic technologies with the goal of accelerating the pace of discovery in the search for treatments that may slow or prevent Alzheimer's and other forms of cognitive decline. For more information, visit <http://mindcenter.umc.edu>.

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's. For more information, visit www.alz.org.

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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/>.