Health System To Purchase HealthSouth Medical Center

**SOUTHSIDE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT IN PLACE**

The UAB Health System (UABHS) will purchase the 17.5-acre HealthSouth Medical Center on Birmingham’s Southside for $33 million. The purchase is contingent upon regulatory approval, which UAB hopes to obtain in the next few months. In the interim, UABHS undertook management of the hospital effective August 1.

The complete purchase will include the main hospital campus, two professional office buildings, more than 1,400 parking spaces, and outlying structures.

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“These agreements enable University Hospital to grow its physical plant to meet expanding demand for patient services,” Hoidal says.

In January 2007, UAB also will assume full ownership of the gamma knife, stationed at the Southside campus. The university already has half-ownership of the machine, which has been used in 2,651 sessions since its purchase in 1996.

Other items of note about the sale:

- UAB is collaborating with HealthSouth to stabilize the workforce, medical staff, and patient volumes at HealthSouth Southside.
- The university is implementing an array of initiatives to make the facility the community success it once was. HealthSouth Rehabilitation Corp. purchased the HealthSouth Medical Center (which evolved from the old South Highlands Infirmary, founded in 1910 as Birmingham’s second oldest hospital) in 1989 after several years of expansion.
- “We look forward to re-energizing this hospital and to the facility becoming a productive affiliate of the UAB Health System,” UABHS Executive Vice President Steve Pickett says.
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**HEALTHSOUTH CAMPUS**

“We plan on operating the facility as a hospital that is part of the UAB Health System and are evaluating what permanent services and operations, perhaps even the UAB Callahan Eye Foundation Hospital, will move there after purchase is finalized,” Hoidal continues. During the management agreement, some UAB services, including orthopaedics, plastic surgery, otolaryngology, and gynecologic oncology will have privileges to provide services at the HealthSouth campus.

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ACCOLADES

Dr. Ami Iskandrian, MD, received the Vittoria Alata award by Paolo Corsini, mayor of Brescia, Italy, at the 16th Annual Thoracic Imaging Meeting of the Italian Society of Radiology in Brescia. The award was presented in recognition of his activity in the field of cardiology and nuclear cardiology and his contributions to development of the field.

The Vittoria Alata, a bronze statue that is Brescia’s city symbol, stands for “winged victory.” It was once believed to be a Roman statue. Recent studies confirm it is of Hellenistic origins, dating to the third century B.C., of Aphrodite mirroring herself in the shield of her brother Mars, god of war. The wings were added in the 1st century A.D., and at that time, the symbolic significance of the statue was changed to that of “winged victory.”

West Joins Physical Medicine And Rehab

UAB Professor and Chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Amie B. Jackson, MD, announces the appointment of DeLisa A. West, PhD, as assistant professor.

A graduate of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Dr. West completed a master’s degree in clinical psychology at the University of the District of Columbia and a PhD in clinical psychology at the California School of Professional Psychology/Alliant International University in Alameda. After an internship at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans Medical Center in Loma Linda, California, she completed a neuropsychology fellowship at The Institute of Rehabilitation and Research in Houston, Texas, which is affiliated with Baylor College of Medicine, The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, and Texas A&M University System Health Science Center.

Among her numerous honors and awards, Dr. West received the Award of Excellence from the University of the District of Columbia, where she also was named in “Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.” Additionally, she received honorable mention from the American Psychological Association’s Minority Fellowship Program (1999-2000).

Dr. West’s major research interests include neuropsychological assessment, aging, transmission of cultural values, rehabilitation, grandparenthood in relation to lifespan development, and brain injury secondary to domestic violence. Her clinical interests center on geriatrics, neuropsychological functioning in medical disorders, depression, and issues in ethnic minority mental health.

Dr. West is accepting patients at Spain Rehabilitation Center; call 934-3454 for patient appointments. Her e-mail is westde@uab.edu.

UAB CALL CENTER’S AUTOMATIC PAGING MODULE — MEET ME PAGING

The Call Park feature is now also available without operator interface, by calling the MEET ME line at 996-2255. In order to initiate a nonoperator assisted MEET, users will need to know the recipient’s pager number. Once the pager ID number of the UAB staff person they wish to “MEET” has been entered, the system instructs users to speak their name and press #. The system pages the other person’s pager, displaying a phone number to call the appropriate MEET ME line. Once the paged party dials the callback number displayed in the pager, the two parties will be connected.

Users who do not know pager numbers of persons whom they wish to MEET can place the transaction through the UAB Operator by calling 934-3411 or dialing “O.” For more information or to schedule training, contact the Call Center at 934-4607.

NEWSMAKERS

DARLEY-USMAR IS CIRB CHAIR

Victor Darley-Usmar, PhD, has been appointed chair of the Conflict of Interest Review Board (CIRB), replacing Edward W. Hook III, MD, who served on the board for 8 years, 4 of them as chair. Dr. Darley-Usmar is UAB professor of pathology and associate medical dean for post-doctoral education. His major research focus is elucidating how free radicals control cell function.
and contribute to cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Darley-Usmar received his PhD degree from the University of Essex in the United Kingdom (UK) and completed postdoctoral studies at the University of Tsukuba in Japan. After a brief teaching and research period at the University of Tsukuba in Japan, he returned to the UK to join the Wellcome Research Foundation in Beckenham, Kent. As a research scientist, he initiated projects in the emerging field of free-radical biology and contributed to the discovery that nitric oxide controls mitochondrial function. Upon merger of the company with GlaxoSmithKline in 1995, he joined the UAB Free Radical Group and now leads research investigating the role of mitochondria and redox cell signaling, with a particular emphasis on nitric oxide.

CIRB’s mission is to maintain public trust in the university’s research and sponsored programs by ensuring that they are objective and not influenced by financial conflicts of interest.

**ERRATUM**

Sharp-eyed reader Silvio Litovsky, MD, UAB assistant professor of pathology, correctly identified the photo in the August 8, 2005, issue of *Synopsis*, page 3, as James T. Wilkerson, MD, of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, not S. Rexford Kenname, MD. Dr. Wilkerson was the Rex Kenname Distinguished Lecturer. *Synopsis* regrets the error.

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**UAB Center for Heart Failure Research continued from page 1**

“UAB was built on the concept of collaboration and pooling all resources in an academic environment to study mechanisms of disease,” says Louis Dell’Italia, MD, director of the SCCOR program and Center for Heart Failure Research. Ahsan Husain, PhD, serves as codirector.

The Center for Heart Failure Research was established in 2003 in an effort to understand and treat heart failure by integrating basic and clinical scientists, which helped UAB to qualify for the SCCOR grant.

“Researchers at the Center for Heart Failure Research were the first to identify an alternative pathway for the formation of angiotensin II and to identify that these pathways are compartmentalized in the heart. We were also the first to reveal a link between resistant hypertension and an increase in the neurohormone aldosterone, which provided a new method to treat patients with difficult-to-control hypertension,” Dr. Dell’Italia says.

These studies will enable researchers to identify common and unique pathogenic mechanisms for chronic heart failure and will employ novel therapeutic strategies in patients based on insights gained from both clinical investigation and the study of clinically relevant basic research.

The SCCOR program consists of three projects to examine heart failure — one among patients with mitral regurgitation, directed by Dr. Dell’Italia; an aldosterone-induced myocardial fibrosis project, directed by David Calhoun, MD; and the impact of diabetes on left ventricular remodeling, directed by John Chatham, MD. A system of CORE collaborators is used by researchers in each subproject. Core areas foster interactions between investigators, accelerate the pace of research and the translation of basic research to clinical applications, and ensure a productive research effort. Projects are supported by an administrative core; a bioanalytical core, directed by Bruce Freeman, PhD; and an imaging core, directed by Dr. Dell’Italia.

“Our approach to the three separate areas of heart disease research will consider the underlying etiologies, which have distinct mechanistic and functional consequences,” Dr. Dell’Italia says. “To develop new, targeted therapies, we must understand and account for these unique causes and differences. That is our goal with all three SCCOR projects and why NIH SCCOR programs require us to focus on the clinical and basic science issues.”

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**THE HEALTH SERVICES FOUNDATION’S GENERAL ENDOWMENT FUND GRANTS, 2005-2006**

- October 31, 2005 — General Endowment Fund (GEF) Review Group recommendations completed
- December 12, 2005 — GEF Committee meeting
- January 23, 2006 — Health Services Foundation Board decisions released
- March 1, 2006 — Funding available for use by awardees.

For guidelines and more information: [www.uab.edu/uasom](http://www.uab.edu/uasom)

UAB physicians: visit MSI, the password-protected Medical Staff intranet site, at [https://horizon.hs.uab.edu](https://horizon.hs.uab.edu)
Use **Standard Precautions** — avoidance and personal protective equipment, such as gloves — to prevent contact between your skin and mucous membranes and the blood, body fluids, tissues, mucous membranes, and non-intact skin of all patients.

**Report any exposure** to blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, and non-intact skin at UAB immediately to Employee Health (934-3675, Jefferson Tower, first floor, Monday-Friday, 8 AM to 4 PM) or to the Rapid Response Team (934-3411, all other times). It provides risk assessment, counseling, baseline serologic testing, and immunization/chemoprophylaxis as necessary.

Make sure you are **immune to hepatitis B**. If your antibody titer was not checked 1 to 2 months after the third dose of vaccine, have it checked now in Employee Health.

Have a high index of suspicion for **tuberculosis** when you encounter a patient with cough of more than 2 weeks duration, hemoptysis, fever, night sweats, anorexia, or weight loss. Most patients with tuberculosis are undiagnosed on admission. The chest radiograph may show apical infiltrates, cavitary pneumonia, or nodular opacities. Admit potential cases directly to Airborne Isolation rooms.

Always put on an N95 respirator (mask) before entering AFB Isolation. Residents must get a tuberculin skin test yearly at Employee Health.

The burden of **nosocomial infectious disease due to multidrug-resistant bacteria** is increasing; common problems include methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus faecium* (VRE). To prevent the spread of these pathogens, as well as gram-negative bacilli and *Clostridium difficile*, from patient to patient, wash your hands or disinfect them with alcohol between each and every patient contact — this is critical in the ICUs.

Patients with colonization or disease due to MRSA, VRE, or another antibiotic-resistant bacteria are cared for using **Contact Precautions** — put on gloves and a gown when you enter these rooms; take them off and wash your hands when you exit. Preventing hospital-acquired infections gets your patients home faster with less complicated stays.

Address any infection control questions to Alan Stamm, MD, chairman of the UAB Health System Infection Control Committee (934-9638 or astamm@uab.edu) or one of the infection control practitioners (934-5324).

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**Your House Staff Council Officers**

Officers for the 2004-2005 term, which began in August, were elected at the recent House Staff Council meeting. They are: Ronnie “Eddie” Mathews, MD, Internal Medicine, president; Noah Bunker, MD, Anesthesiology, vice president and *Synopsis* liaison; and Tracy Marie Rauch, MD, Pathology, secretary/treasurer.

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**Infection Control For Residents**

New and continuing residents need to keep infection control issues in mind.