

PRESS RELEASE

Florida State University Enters Research Partnership With Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare

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By Jill Elish

TALLAHASSEE, FL - T Florida State University and Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare have signed an agreement to work as research partners on projects with potential to directly impact health care in the Big Bend and across Florida. The agreement will allow Tallahassee Memorial Hospital's more than 500 affiliated physicians, many of whom already serve as members of the FSU College of Medicine clinical faculty, to conduct laboratory research and clinical trials with university researchers from the medical school as well as other colleges and departments. "This is the beginning of a unique research effort," said Florida State President T.K. Wetherell. "In community partnerships such as the one we are forging with TMH, we will be able to provide a body of knowledge through which Florida's citizens will see unprecedented health care benefits." Mark O'Bryant, president and chief executive officer of Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, said TMH is honored to be in the vanguard of this statewide effort to improve health care through research. "This partnership presents a golden opportunity to bring great minds together," O'Bryant said. "We believe the result of their work will be a healthier community for us all." Unlike traditional medical schools where research takes place both in labs and in an academic medical center, the FSU College of Medicine has no single teaching hospital. Instead, the college counts more than 60 teaching hospitals, clinics and community health care centers around the state of Florida as partners in educating medical students. Physicians across Florida are part of the college's clerkship faculty, meaning they agree to teach a required or elective rotation to one or two third- or fourth-year medical students at a time. The College of Medicine previously had no mechanism in place for physicians who serve as clinical faculty to participate in or lead university research projects. With this agreement with TMH, the College of Medicine now has a model that could be extended to other community hospitals where FSU medical students learn. This would provide a foundation for the clinical research program with the potential to involve more than 1,500 physicians and their 2 million patients. "Such a network would give the FSU College of Medicine perhaps the most dynamic and all-encompassing medical research program in the state," said Myra Hurt, senior associate dean for research and graduate programs at the College of Medicine. "Few medical schools anywhere would have access to more patients of varied backgrounds and covering all of the stages of disease processes across the full continuum of human aging." The National Institutes of Health is pushing for an emphasis on translating discoveries from the laboratory into improved patient care, according to Dr. John P. Fogarty, dean of the College of Medicine. The agreement between TMH and FSU puts the "bench to bedside to community" philosophy into practice by allowing physicians and researchers to conduct clinical trials and develop new treatments for a multitude of diseases. The partners already are developing initiatives for neurological and genetic associated diseases under this agreement. Dr. Charles G. "Gerry" Maitland, a professor of clinical sciences and director of the FSU Neurological Research Institute who also is in private practice in Tallahassee, said patients will be the beneficiaries of these initiatives. "The presence of a translational laboratory coupled with the uniqueness of the College of Medicine's six campuses, places us on the cutting edge of investigative technologies," Maitland said. "Consequently, patients treated here at TMH and at the other five campuses will have available to them the most advanced and innovative treatments." The FSU-TMH agreement will set the stage for more collaborative efforts, such as the Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and College of

Medicine/College of Communication Neurolinguistic-Neurocognitive Research Center founded in 2005 and housed at TMH. Maitland and Leonard LaPointe, the FSU Francis Eppes Professor of Communication Disorders, serve as co-directors of the center, which was established to research the effects of cognitive dysfunction and develop new therapies for patients. The center aspires to be recognized as one of the premier clinical research centers in the country for brain-behavior disorders. Paula Fortunas, president and chief executive officer of the TMH Foundation, said increasing physician and hospital clinical research is a key component of TMH's strategic plan. "The FSU-TMH partnership is truly a powerful one, and this research collaboration agreement represents another measure of that strength as it outlines the long-range vision of the two institutions and opens medical, clinical and educational initiatives to serve the greater good," she said. Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, Inc. is a not-for-profit, comprehensive system of health care services that include Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, the seventh largest hospital in Florida; a psychiatric hospital; a rehabilitation center; a family residency program; and associated clinics and satellite facilities in five surrounding counties.