

## THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

### The College of Medicine

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Dear Colleagues,

July 1, 2009

In the last newsletter I presented our education strategy to move to the top quartile. I was pleased to note that we are on track to reach our goal in education. Now, I would like to discuss our clinical programs and strategic goals in our clinical mission, focusing primarily on the Memphis Campus.

The clinical mission of UTHSC COM on the Memphis campus is driven by several practice groups comprising both full time and affiliated faculty. The largest of these is the UT Medical Group, Inc. (UTMG), a large multi-specialty full time faculty practice plan. Several single-specialty full time faculty practice groups also exist. These include the University of Tennessee Cancer Institute, University Pathology, and University Neurology. In addition, there are two large affiliated groups, Semmes-Murphey Neurosurgery and The Campbell Clinic Orthopedic Surgery, which are primarily composed of affiliated faculty. COM affiliated faculty are also at the Veterans Administration Medical Center and St. Jude Cancer Children's Research Hospital. While essential to our research and teaching missions, each of these hospitals has its own distinct mission.

The objectives of the College's clinical practices are to:

- provide the clinical teaching arm of the college for medical students, residents, and fellows,
- conduct patient-based research that contributes to the national stature of COM,
- financially support the College's missions, and
- assume the bulk of clinical faculty's compensation.

These objectives are integral to the missions of UTHSC COM and support the strategic goals we have set for COM.

One of the key strategic goals for our college is to develop at least eight comprehensive programs of national stature. Nationally recognized programs are characterized by:

- clinical excellence in both innovative diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and a diverse range of clinical patient care services,
- an outstanding venue for medical student, resident and fellow clinical education, and
- a clinical market share sufficient to contribute to the support of COM directly through faculty salaries and indirectly through hospital affiliations and contracts.

COM currently has four nationally ranked programs: (1) Trauma, (2) The Hamilton Eye Institute, (3) Solid Organ Transplantation, prominent in recent news, and (4) Clinical Neurosciences. In addition, our Pediatric Cardiovascular program and a combined Clinical Orthopedics/Musculoskeletal program are rapidly advancing toward national stature. Perinatal/Neonatal Care, Adult Cardiovascular, and Adult Cancer reflect COM's aspirational targets. Finally, we would be remiss to not note the benefit we gain from our affiliated faculty at St. Jude Children's Cancer Research Hospital, one of the preeminent children's cancer programs in the nation.

Another key goal for our clinical mission is to reach a volume of clinical care that allows for a strong market position. Growth of our clinical programs and faculty clinical practices are central to the well-being of the COM. A strong market share fosters teaching and clinical research, and it enables us to acquire hospital support for the teaching and research missions of the COM. The faculty in our practice groups are not intended to be exclusive as private practitioners as they have substantial teaching roles.

The current financial status of the college's practice groups are solid despite substantial severe economic downturns each group faces. UTMG has grown to gross revenues in excess of \$135 million annually. Our individual single-specialty practice groups have also shown substantial growth. Combined, our full-time faculty single-specialty and multi-specialty groups have gross clinical revenues in

excess of \$180 million. Thus, the college's clinical practice arm, as measured by gross clinical revenue, has met a top quartile standard.

As we move forward COM will continue to work on the steady growth of our clinical practices at the Methodist University Hospital and for a substantial expansion of our out-east practices, including identification of a key out-east hospital partner. Further, continued support and expansion of our centers of excellence at The MED, including the Trauma Center, Burn Unit, neonatal and obstetrical services will be essential to our progress towards the top quartile. Finally, we recognize we must have tighter alignment with our main teaching hospitals in order to reach top quartile status. To that end, we have begun substantive discussions with Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center concerning the fundamental aspects of our clinical practice partnership.

We have also identified major hurdles to our goals. The economic downturn hit our faculty practices hard. As such, all of the groups have either initiated variable compensation plans based on productivity, or they are in transition to do so. All are also reevaluating their clinical business patterns. It is clear that we need to improve patient accessibility and service, something that our practice groups have not typically done well. This is mandatory to increase patient satisfaction and, as a result, market share.

In short, I believe our clinical strategic plan is on track despite hurdles and challenging goals. I say this with confidence and based on the observations that our volume of care IS growing, our clinical research portfolio continues in a steady recovery from the lean-years, and our clinical programs are clearly gaining in national stature. As always, your suggestions on how to further strengthen our college are welcome.

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